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Series knotted at 2-all

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A child's Holocaust

The Magazine

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Traders in Chicago make their gloom apparent, as the Dow Jones took a dive yesterday. (AP)

Markets dive after Hong Kong crash

NEW YORK (AP) - The Dow Jones industrial average tumbled almost 200 points yesterday in a global stock slide triggered by a market panic in Hong Kong and deteriorating economic conditions throughout Southeast Asia.

Exports heavily to Southeast Asia. In Europe, Frankfurt's DAX index fell 4.7 percent and London's FTSE 100 fell 3.1 percent.

Legg Mason of Baltimore, noting that multinationals such as Coca-Cola and Gillette have already seen their profits hurt by the turmoil that took hold in Asian markets during the summer.

Among the Dow 30, DuPont was the only issue to rise, and IBM, Alcoa and United Technologies were the only components to fall more than 3 points.

Lau advises Netanyahu to apologize for Left remarks

Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Israel Lau yesterday advised Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to apologize for his statement that the left wing had forgotten its Judaism, and said the ensuing uproar is reminiscent of the last days of Pompeii.

anyone, and that if he did, he is sorry for it. If I do something wrong, I do not hesitate to apologize and say I made a mistake.

erable mystic Rabbi Yitzhak Kadouri on Wednesday and asked him to clarify his position on the Left and religion, in view of Netanyahu's statement to him the previous night that "the Left has forgotten what it means to be Jewish."

The controversial statement was made by Netanyahu while he was unaware he was being recorded by Israel Radio.

nationality, but only about the principle guiding us these past 100 years in Israel, and there are people in the Left who have forgotten it."

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UK publication names Mossad No. 2

The Mossad's deputy chief and director of operations, who has been referred to in Israel as "H," was identified yesterday by the London-based newsletter Foreign Report, which has also posted his name on the Internet.

secret services, had only 600 employees and its output was double today's.

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IMPERIAL RUSSIA WATERWAY CRUISE

Mashaal warns of more Hamas attacks 'soon'

By JAY BUSHINSKY, STEVE RODAN, and MOHAMMED NAJIB
Hamas will continue its terror campaign "in the coming days," the organization's Khaled Mashaal warned in an interview published Wednesday.

Al Risalah editor Ghazi Hamad said the newspaper would resume publishing in early November. Al Risalah, with an estimated circulation of less than 10,000, is the only local Palestinian publication that consistently features articles critical of the PA and its policies.

'PA poisoning atmosphere', Page 2

The Islamic Jihad is scheduled to organize a rally today in Rafah to mark the second anniversary of the assassination of its leader, Fathi Shkaki.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's communications adviser, David Bar-Ilan, said the most shocking aspect of the Yassin speech is that it took place with the tacit approval of the PA.

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Report: Christians persecuted by PA

By STEVE RODAN

The dwindling Christian minority in the Palestinian Authority areas is being persecuted, an Israeli government report says. Cemeteries are being vandalized, churches are being burglarized and Islamic militants fearlessly harass Christian youngsters, according to the report.

At the same time, the report says, the PA has taken control of the churches and is pressuring their leaders to serve as mouthpieces for Yasser Arafat and opponents of Israel.

"On the social and religious level, the few Christians remaining in PA-controlled areas are subjected to brutal and relentless persecution," the report says.

"Christian cemeteries have been destroyed, monasteries have had their telephone lines cut, and there have been break-ins to convents."

Virtually none of these incidents are reported to authorities because of fear of retaliation, the report says.

The report reviews the August clash between Christians and police in Beit Sabur, prompted by an attack by Islamic militants on Christian youngsters. Six people were injured in the clash and none of the police officers was disciplined.

"Rather than investigating the incident and punishing those responsible," the report says, "the PA is attempting to cover it up and has threatened anyone who dares to publicize the story."

The report also details the harassment of Christian pastors and Moslem converts to

Christianity.

In late June, one convert in the northern West Bank was arrested by PA Preventive Security Service agents and has been tortured since then in a PA prison.

Another Palestinian convert to Christianity living near Nablus was arrested by PA police and urged by a Moslem preacher to renounce his new faith, the report says. When the convert refused, he was charged and sentenced by a PA court for what it called the crime of insulting a religious leader.

He is now being detained in a Nablus prison cell with more than 30 inmates, most of whom are serving life sentences for murder.

Yet another Christian convert in Ramallah was warned by PA police to stop proselytizing or he would be arrested and charged with spying, the report says.

The report cites the case of an unnamed Ramallah pastor who was warned recently by PA security agents that they were monitoring his evangelical activities and planned to call him in for questioning.

Some of the details in the report, particularly those concerning PA harassment of Christian converts, was confirmed by church sources.

PA officials, however, said many of the incidents mentioned in the Israeli report were either baseless or exaggerated.

The officials said that in places like Jericho, Western-based Christian activists operate freely despite the opposition of Hamas militants. In Jericho, for example, a Christian pastor organized a parade in June in which about 100

people sang songs in praise of Jesus as they marched down the main street of this predominantly Moslem town.

Ibrahim Kandelaft, responsible for Christian affairs in the PA, said he recalls some reports of vandalism of Christian cemeteries.

"These are very minor accidents," he said.

"Perhaps they are done by children. They don't mean any harm."

He added, "We Christians have a fanatic minority. If they see a Moslem pass through a cemetery, they say he is bent on desecration."

Kandelaft said he was informed by a foreign journalist of the arrest of a Christian convert but has not come across any such cases himself.

He said many Christians, both men and women, marry Moslems without incident.

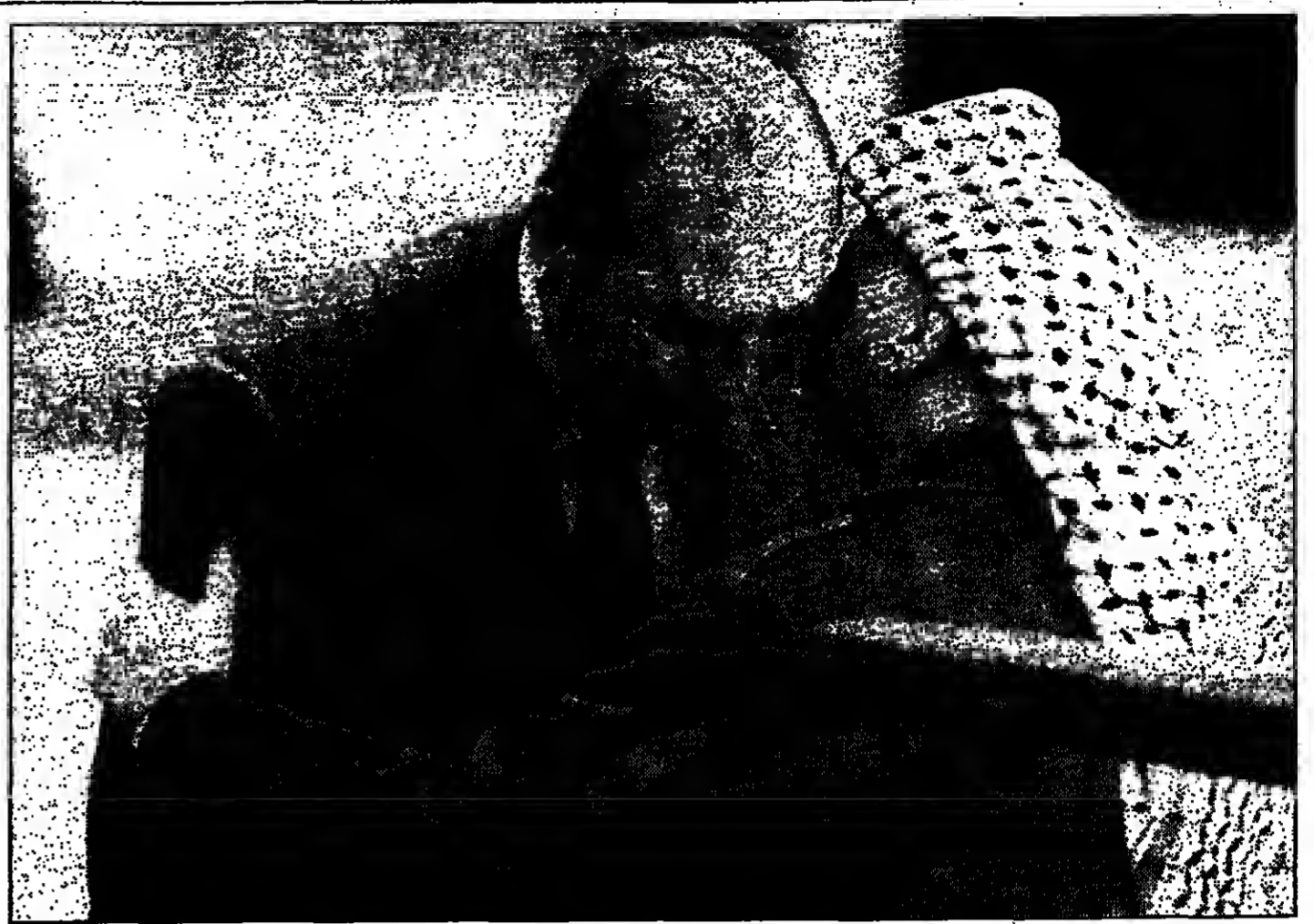
"The PA doesn't interfere in this," he said.

The report says Christians are rapidly emigrating from PA areas. It says Bethlehem, which in 1948 was 80 percent Christian, is today 80 percent Moslem. The PA plans to hold a census in Jerusalem, where many Christians still reside.

"Today, there are very few Christians remaining in the Palestinian-controlled parts of the West Bank," the report said.

"Those who can, emigrate. There will soon be no Christians remaining in PA-controlled areas," the report says.

"The PA is trying to hide the fact that there is a massive wave of Christian emigration from the areas under its control."



Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat kisses French President Jacques Chirac upon his arrival for talks at the Elysee Palace yesterday. (Reuters)

Israel criticizes PA for saying peace process still frozen

By STEVE RODAN, JAY BUSHENSKY, and news agencies

Senior officials accused the Palestinian Authority yesterday of "poisoning the diplomatic atmosphere" by contending that the peace process is still frozen despite US peace envoy Dennis Ross's claim that important progress had been made in the latest rounds of talks.

The officials deplored such statements as the one made by the PA's information minister, Yasser Abed-Rabbo, that "no progress has been achieved." The PA said yesterday Ross had failed in his attempt to achieve agreement between Israelis and Palestinians on the implementation of the interim accords and warned of renewed violence in the area.

Abed-Rabbo said Ross's visit was an exercise in public relations aimed at ensuring Arab attendance at the Middle East economic conference in Qatar next month.

PA Local Government Minister Saeb Erekat agreed that Ross did

not change Israel's position. He said he hoped the US would find a way to force Israel to change its negotiating stance during the high-level talks in Washington next week.

The officials "deplored" similar comments by the PA's various spokesmen and contended that since the renewal of contacts in New York with the assistance of the US last month there had been a number of meetings at the senior level as well as working sessions. They took these as positive signs, they said.

"They noted that the Israeli negotiating teams had been instructed to try to make headway."

In contrast, they said the "repeated statements" by PA aides to the contrary was "surprising, especially in view of the fact that Ross and his staff believe that the talks indeed did advance and that important achievements were made."

The dissatisfaction expressed by PA officials came as senior

officials left the region for meetings in Europe and the US. PA Chairman Yasser Arafat began his tour of Europe and met French President Jacques Chirac. Aides of Chirac said Arafat had made "a very pessimistic analysis" of the situation, which the French president deemed "completely blocked."

Arafat later extended Jewish New Year's wishes in Hebrew to the Israeli people. "I want to say *Shana Tova* [Happy New Year] and best wishes from the Jewish people to our Israeli partners," he said at the start of an address to the General Conference of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.

After an emotional tribute to assassinated Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin, Arafat said that since Netanyahu took power last year "the great hopes born of the peace process began to fade."

Arafat said he condemned Hamas suicide attacks and made every effort to thwart such actions, "but it is not possible to eradicate acts of violence and

terrorism unless we pull out their roots and eradicate their causes."

PA Preventive Security Service chief Jibril Rajoub flew to Washington for meetings with US defense and foreign affairs officials. Palestinian officials said the Rajoub meetings are meant to persuade the Clinton administration and Congress that the PA is serious about fighting terrorism.

Ahmed Abdul-Rahman, secretary of the PA cabinet, said the Washington negotiations will focus on four issues: the implementation of the first and second redeployment in the West Bank; the halt in construction of settlements; mutual security for Israelis and Palestinians; and final status negotiations.

Abdul-Rahman said that without progress on the issues of redeployment and a halt in settlement there is no reason to continue negotiations. He said the Palestinian aim in the talks is to "liberate Palestinian land by the withdrawal of Israeli forces, and not running in an empty circle always talking about terrorism and security."

7 Palestinian quarry owners held in explosives scam

By MARGOT DUDKEVICH

Police, IDF troops, and security forces arrested seven Palestinian quarry owners from the Hebron area on Tuesday night and Wednesday morning.

Their arrests are connected with the ongoing police investigation of large amounts of explosives that have disappeared from building sites in the West Bank.

Jerusalem police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby said last night

the seven are suspected of blasting without permits at different quarries using explosives that were illegally sold or held by Israeli contractors arrested last week. He added that more arrests are likely and hundreds of kilos of explosives are still unaccounted for.

Ben-Ruby stressed that police and security forces fear that some of the missing explosives have already reached the hands of terrorist organizations.

Last week police arrested 10

Israeli contractors suspected of illegally possessing and selling explosives. In the backyard of one contractor's home police found 170 kg. of explosives, scores of detonators, and fuse cord. Their arrests came shortly after the arrests of two Palestinians near Ma'aleh Adumim carrying 50 kg. of explosives in their car. The two led police to a building in the village of Bani Naim near Hebron, where they had hidden an additional 30 kg. of explosives.

ARRIVALS

Willie Trump from Williams Island, Florida, for acceptance of "The Chesed Award for Outstanding Commitment to Children with Developmental Disabilities in Israel" by Minister of Health, Mr. Yehoshua Matza.

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MOSSAD
Continued from Page 1

Levine is considered the prime contender to take over the Mossad, the newsletter reported, because he is close to retirement and close to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He was, according to *Foreign Report*, head of the General Staff Reconnaissance Unit (Sayeret Matkal) when Netanyahu was a private, and he was instrumental in persuading Netanyahu to extend his army service and become an officer.

The newsletter also described a recent purported exchange between Levine and Sheikh Nabil Kaouk, head of Hizbullah in south Lebanon. It quotes Kaouk as saying he had heard privately that Levine was to retire shortly and that the Israeli general was anxious to ensure his assignment would end honorably and happily.

"I sent him a message via the UN force that he would leave defeated and humiliated," Kaouk is quoted as saying.

LAU
Continued from Page 1

Netanyahu said that in speaking about the biblical spies he meant to say that many on the Left have forgotten the key to the Jewish nation's existence in Israel, which is that the Jews should be defended by Jews.

Opposition leader Ehud Barak said the prime minister's explanation the next day - that his words had been taken out of context - was an insult to the public's intelligence and an embarrassment to his own voters. "Judaism is not a gimmick. Netanyahu is not the one to teach me Judaism. Israel deserves a more serious, mature, and much more responsible prime minister," Barak said.

Dozens of Likud activists demonstrated Wednesday outside Netanyahu's home with posters saying, "I'm proud of Bibi" and "the Left is inciting to war."

MK Michael Eitan (Likud) said he agreed with Netanyahu's statement about the Left wing's Judaism, citing Barak who was quoted in an interview earlier as saying that Labor must distinguish itself from Meretz "because we need Jewish roots." Eitan said this shows Netanyahu was right and the Left has forgotten its Judaism.

Meretz Knesset faction head MK Haim Oron said his faction will turn the prime minister's opening statement in the Knesset next Monday into a no-confidence vote.

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On receiving the CHESSED AWARD, from the Minister of Health, Mr. Yehoshua Matza for outstanding commitment to children with developmental disabilities in Israel.

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The Knesset, Jerusalem

"The Old Boys' Club"

Ilana Podolsky will be going to jail on October 26 because she, as a new immigrant from Russia, does not belong to the "Old Boys' Club," Simcha Dinitz does.

The former head of the Jewish Agency was convicted by a District Court Judge of the crime of misusing Agency funds for his own personal benefit. He will not be going to jail, nor will there be a criminal record against him. The Supreme Court, itself made up of elite members of the "Old Boys' Club," exonerated Simcha and absolved him of all formal guilt. Judge Orr, writing the majority opinion, did say for posterity that he was sure from the record that Dinitz had committed a crime, but the basis for letting him off the hook was that there was not enough evidence to prove "beyond a reasonable doubt" that he had committed the crime for which he was charged. The forceful minority opinion of Judge Dorner was quite clear, however: there was evidence beyond a reasonable doubt, that Simcha Dinitz had committed the crimes for which he had been convicted. How is it possible that Supreme Court justices could differ with regard to the clear cut evidence in the court record? Some other factors must have been at play. In the consideration of the guilt or innocence of Simcha Dinitz we contend that "The Old Boys' Club" factor played a prominent role in the final decision.

That too is the factor that is sending Ilana Podolsky to jail. The evidence in the Podolsky case was far less convincing than that in the Dinitz case. Ilana, after all, was defending herself, her aged mother, a Holocaust survivor, and the two young relatives in her car, from a lethal attack by an Arab mob, which was throwing stones and Molotov Cocktails at her vehicle. In what was clearly an act of self-defense, she fired a gun into the air. The ricocheting bullet struck one of the Arabs. When he later died, Ilana was charged and tried for murder. On flimsy, hostile and unreliable Arab testimony, she was convicted by the court of manslaughter, and sentenced to three years. Incredibly, according to the Court, she used more force in her self-defense than was necessary! On appeal, the Supreme Court reduced the jail term to one year, and she is to be imprisoned on October 26, after the Holidays. Had she been a member of "The Old Boys' Club," that group of Labor veterans who appointed the members of the present Supreme Court, she would be free today. Promoting Oslo does not permit criticism of the Arabs; in Labor's view, any condemnation of Arab actions - stoning and firebombing Jews, especially Jews located in Judea, Samaria, or the Gaza Strip, would be harmful to the peace process. So, unlike Dinitz, Ilana, the victim of such an Arab attack, goes to jail. "Justice" becomes a mockery, when your chances of receiving it depend on whether you belong to "The Old Boys' Club" or not.

Phone or Fax President Weizman to pardon Ilana, for her sake, and also for the right of all of us to defend ourselves. Tel. 02-670-7211, Fax. 02-561-0037

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סוכן מן הארץ

NEWS

in brief

Congo Brazzaville's new leader in capital

BRAZZAVILLE (Reuters) — Congo Republic's civil war victor, former Marxist military dictator, Denis Sassou Nguesso arrived in the bombed-out capital yesterday and vilified ousted president Pascal Lissouba, the first democratically elected president, as a "criminal and enemy of the people."
Soldiers from the Angolan army, which helped propel Sassou to power last Wednesday in the oil rich West African country, checked his route into Brazzaville. Angolan intervention smashed a weak and comparatively poorly equipped government army and allied militias last week.

3 white South African bombers jailed for life

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) — Three white right-wingers convicted of two bombings near Cape Town that killed four people last year were sentenced to life imprisonment yesterday, state radio said. Cliffe Barnard, Jan van der Westhuizen, and Koper Myburgh received four life terms and 88 years each for the Christmas Eve bomb attacks, which also wounded over 60 people. The two pipe bombs exploded in a supermarket and pharmacy in the town of Worcester 90 km northeast of Cape Town. The men belonged to an unknown fringe group called "Israel Vision," which believes whites are the chosen race.

Czech foreign minister steps down

PRAGUE, Czech Republic (AP) — Czech Foreign Minister Josef Zeleniec, who is also deputy chairman of the Civic Democratic Party, said yesterday he is leaving both posts, apparently due to differences with Premier Vaclav Klaus. The news agency CTK quoted Zeleniec as saying he disagrees with the way in which his party's candidate for interior minister is being selected and that he has not been informed of important changes in the party's financial management. President Vaclav Havel immediately announced that he was not accepting Zeleniec's resignation.

'Philip Morris to test "smokeless" cigarette'

NEW YORK (AP) — The world's largest cigarette company plans to test a microelectronic cigarette holder that eliminates most of the smoke and ash from a cigarette, *The New York Times* reported yesterday. Over the next month, the Accord — a beeper-sized, 120-gram box containing a special cigarette and an electronically controlled lighter — will be tested by Philip Morris Cos. in the US and Japan. The device will eliminate 90% of secondhand smoke, but smokers will still inhale the same amount of tar and nicotine as in conventional ultralight cigarettes.

A memorial and unveiling ceremony in memory of our dear husband, father, brother and grandfather
DANIEL FERZIGER 57
הנ"ל בן רחובין ומנהל פרדסי 71
will be held on Sunday, October 26, 1997.
Location: Eretz Hachayyim Cemetery, Beit Shemesh.
Time: 9:30 a.m.
The Family
For more details please call: 09-765-0686 or 03-573-3563

With deep sorrow we announce the passing of our dear mother, sister, and grandmother
ERNA ESTHER SOFFE 57
The funeral will take place today, Friday, October 24, 1997, at 10:30 a.m. at the Berman Synagogue, Yeshivat Hadarom, Rehovot, and will continue to the Holon Cemetery.
Shiva at Rehov Haraz 15, Rehovot Tel. 08-947-1947
Daughters: Elise Hanhart, Switzerland
Jenny Kartin, Rehovot
Sisters: Hannah Rosenbaum, England
Tila Hirsh, England

With great sorrow and deep despair we announce the passing at the fullness of her years our dear mother and grandmother
HENY YETY RAYERSBACH
The funeral will take place today, Friday, October 24, 1997 (כ"ב תשרי תשנ"ז) at 11:15 a.m. at Kiryat Shaul Cemetery.
Shiva at the Menuha home, Rehov Kehilat Kishinov13, Hadar Yosef, Tel Aviv.
Son: Uri and family
Daughter: Hava and family
Grandchildren, and great-grandchildren

On the thirty-ninth anniversary of the death of our dear mother and grandmother
MALKA (Maria) LASZLO 71
widow of the late journalist Ernst Zvi Laszlo 71 we will visit her grave at Har Hamenuhot, Jerusalem on Tuesday, October 28, 1997, at 2:30 p.m.
The Family

The unveiling of the matzeva for our beloved mother and grandmother
TONI ROSEN 77
will take place on Sunday, October 26 at 12 noon in the ancient cemetery in Safed
The Rosen and Rand Families

Algerians vote under tight security



Algerian Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia (left) and Interior Minister Mustapha Benmansour choose candidates in local elections in Algiers yesterday.

ALGIERS (AP) — Security forces kept a discreet watch on polling stations while Algerians cast ballots yesterday in local elections, the last of four votes aimed at squelching an Islamic revival that has snowballed into an insurgency.

It was the first vote for local and regional officials since 1990, when the Islamic Salvation Front swept into the political spotlight with a resounding victory, taking nearly half of all city halls and all major cities.

The now-banned party called for a boycott of yesterday's vote for some 15,000 local and regional assembly representatives. More than 84,000 candidates were running nationwide. Final results are not expected before later today.

While security forces battle Islamic insurgents, President Liamine Zeroual, a retired general, has undertaken a vast restructuring of the nation's political institutions that, under a veneer of democracy, gives the president greater control and squelches militant Islam.

This election was lackluster, dominated by fears of a high abstention rate among Algeria's nearly 16 million registered voters and scores skewed by fraud, as they were in June legislative elections. The Interior Ministry said the turnout was 55.7 percent at 6 p.m.

Security forces kept a watch on polling stations in the capital, but were out in force in some suburbs that have been flashpoints for violence in an insurgency that has killed an estimated 75,000 people in nearly six years.

Violence wracking Algeria was a favorite theme of many of the candidates — 10 of whom were killed while campaigning — and the dominant reason cited by voters for going to the polls.

"I'm voting above all for safety, so that my children don't die with their throats slit," said a 36-year-

old school teacher in the western suburb of Kouba, once a rallying point for the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front.

The winners of yesterday's vote will serve as a pool from which two-thirds of the members of a new upper house of parliament will be drawn. Zeroual will pick the other third — giving him virtual control of the legislature.

Nearly half the winners will replace appointees of the military-backed government which fired Salvation Front representatives in a crackdown on fundamentalists poised to win a January 1992 legislative vote. The army canceled that vote, triggering the insurgency.

"Politically, socially, and institutionally, terrorism is being isolated," Foreign Minister Ahmed

Ataf said at a news conference Wednesday. The Islamic Salvation Army, the Salvation Front's military wing, called a unilateral cease-fire October 1.

Security forces have worked for weeks to clean out an Armed Islamic Group stronghold in Ouled Aïel south of Algiers, uncovering a labyrinth of tunnels, bunkers, bomb-making factories, docu-

ments, and supplies stolen in village raids. Earlier this week, security forces killed the group's leader in the eastern city of Constantine, the French-language newspaper *El Watan* reported yesterday.

In a separate operation in Constantine, he killed his right-hand man, who was reportedly carrying a list of candidates to be slain, the paper said.

Pol Pot says: My conscience is clear

SIEM REAP, Cambodia (Reuters) — Cambodian leader Hun Sen yesterday rejected the notorious Pol Pot's insistence that he was not responsible for genocide, and said he hopes to arrest the leader of the "killing fields" regime by year end.

"Why do we need to state that Pol Pot denied killing people? The people who are present here are the remains of Pol Pot's killing," Hun Sen told a news conference in Siem Reap after meeting Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk.

An unrepentant Pol Pot, in an interview in the latest edition of the Hong Kong-based *Far East Economic Review*, denied that more than one million Cambodians died of murder, disease, or overwork during the 1975-79 "killing fields" regime.

"To say that millions died is too much," he said in the interview with the magazine. "My conscience is clear." Pol Pot's former comrades ousted him as leader of the Khmer Rouge in June after a bloody split among its leaders. He now lives under house arrest at the Khmer Rouge headquarters at Anlong Veng in the north Cambodian jungle.

Hun Sen said senior military officers had told him they thought it possible to capture Anlong Veng. "I hope we will arrest him... perhaps by the end of this year," the second prime minister said.

Other Cambodians also expressed disbelief and dismay that Pol Pot felt no remorse for the death and suffering endured during his Maoist-style revolution.

"When I lived under the Khmer regime I saw all kinds of tragedy. They forced me to work hard, I suffered a lot, there was no food to eat," said Ouk Thary, 34, a ticket seller at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh.

The museum is a former school that was turned into a torture center during Pol Pot's rule. About 20,000 people were sent to Tuol Sleng. Only seven survived.

Ouk Thary said two of her brothers were killed and her father died of starvation under Pol Pot's rule. She said she could not accept Pol Pot's claim he had acted only to save Cambodia from Vietnamese domination.

Greek, Turkish ships clash

ANKARA (Reuters) — Turkish army chief Ismail Hakkı Karadayı yesterday accused Greece of raising tension in the Aegean Sea after a Greek minesweeper brushed a Turkish patrol boat.

"We avoid provocations as much as possible... They [Greece] always hope to benefit from tension," he said.

Turkey's state-run Anatolian news agency said a Greek minesweeper on Wednesday hit a Turkish patrol ship that had come to prevent the Greek ship from "harassing" a Turkish submarine.

Greek Defense Ministry officials said their navy minesweeper brushed against a Turkish patrol boat, the result of "dangerous handling by the Turkish captain."

No injuries were reported on either side in the incident, which occurred in international waters between the two Greek islands of Chios and Lesbos.

Gere uses film premiere to press Clinton on China

WASHINGTON — While official Washington prepared for next week's state visit by Chinese President Jiang Zemin, actor Richard Gere turned the spotlight of his latest film premiere onto President Bill Clinton, asking him to stand firm against the Communist giant.

"We're not going to pretend this is a new, cuddly Communist Chinese government we have here. They haven't proven themselves yet," Gere said at a party late Wednesday following the premiere of *Red Corner*. In the film, which opens in US theaters October 31, Gere plays an American executive framed on

murder charges in Beijing by corrupt officials.

Meanwhile, China yesterday criticized US plans to appoint a diplomat to coordinate policies on Tibet. The appointment, a spokesman said, "constitutes interference in our internal affairs."

An outspoken critic of China's human rights record and its control over Tibet, Gere planned a protest rally outside the White House next week plus his own "state-less" dinner, to coincide with the state dinner Clinton is hosting for Jiang.

"We've had a president who has been neither clear nor firm on China's human rights since the

very beginning and that waffling ... with China has sent a message of weakness," the actor said.

Clinton has refused demands from human rights activists and many religious leaders to condition China's Most Favored Nation trade status to improvements in human rights.

Gere's co-star, Bai Ling, said she hopes the film would focus international scrutiny on oppression in China, where her parents still live. Having left her country five years ago, the former Tiananmen Square protester said she is now even more afraid to return after her role in *Red Corner*.

(News agencies)

Mir surges with power after repairs

MOSCOW (Reuters) — Russia's troubled Mir space station hummed with new energy yesterday after the crew linked two solar panels to a new computer guidance system following repairs carried out on Monday in Mir's Spektr module, officials said.

"The work was completed successfully," a Mission Control spokeswoman said after the final stage of a rewiring operation that began with the two Russian cosmonauts on board spending seven

hours on Monday in energy-sapping spacesuits.

Two solar panels on the module now were tracking the sun's rays and soaking up maximum power after being plugged in to the guidance computer in the Kristall module, she said. Spektr was damaged in a near-fatal collision in June with an unmanned cargo craft.

Space officials said after Monday's mission that they expected to gain 30 percent more electricity. Mir lost about half its

power after the collision, but various repairs have restored much of that over the past two months.

"We can now restart experiments which require a lot of electricity," the spokeswoman said yesterday.

The orbital laboratory was reduced to minimal functions for much of the time since the accident, leaving little spare energy for experiments being run by Russian, US and other international space agencies.

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Progress Report

FULFILLING OUR COMMITMENT

The Swiss banks are achieving significant progress towards resolving the issue of dormant World War II-era accounts in a fair and open manner.

Our major initiatives to date include:

Identifying Dormant Accounts

The Swiss banks are committed to identifying all accounts that could have belonged to victims of Nazi persecution.

In addition to conducting their own search for dormant accounts, the Swiss banks are providing complete access and assistance to hundreds of forensic auditors working for the Independent Committee of Eminent Persons, chaired by Paul A. Volcker and comprised of prominent Jewish and Swiss leaders.

Helping Needy Holocaust Survivors

The Swiss banks are committed to helping needy Holocaust survivors.

Earlier this year, the three largest Swiss banks, Credit Suisse, Swiss Bank Corporation, and UBS, contributed 100 million Swiss francs (\$70 million) to establish a special fund for victims of the Holocaust. Other Swiss banks and Swiss industry have since contributed an additional 80 million Swiss francs (\$55 million). With a pledge of 100 million Swiss francs from the Swiss National Bank, the fund now has a total of 280 million Swiss francs (\$194 million). The Fund's board consists of representatives of Jewish organizations and private Swiss citizens and is chaired by Rolf Bloch, leader of the Swiss Jewish community. Proceeds from the Fund will soon be distributed to Holocaust survivors in Eastern Europe.

Publishing Dormant Accounts

The Swiss banks are committed to publishing dormant accounts.

In July, the Swiss banks published an initial list of World War II-era dormant accounts of non-Swiss customers in newspapers around the world and established an Internet site. The Swiss banks also established five international contact offices staffed by the accounting organization of Ernst & Young that was engaged to help rightful owners file claims.

Creating An Expedited Payment Process

The Swiss banks are committed to returning assets to their rightful owners quickly, easily and without cost to claimants.

To accomplish this objective, the banks have established a cost-free, expedited payment process, which is being supervised by an independent, international panel operating under relaxed standards of proof. Claims from the July list are now being processed and payments will be made shortly.

This progress demonstrates both the leadership and the seriousness of the Swiss banks in addressing and resolving this complex issue.

New Information Available

On October 29, the following World War II-era accounts will be published:

- Dormant passbooks and savings accounts of non-Swiss citizens.
Dormant accounts of non-Swiss citizens that have been identified as a result of the Swiss banks' ongoing search.
Dormant accounts belonging to Swiss citizens.

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If you have any questions or need assistance, please call the following toll-free number: 1-800-471-471

You can also search for dormant accounts and review other pertinent information at the Swiss Bankers Association's Internet site: http://www.dormantaccounts.ch

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Mandela: Libya bigger friend of S. Africa than Britain, US

TRIPOLI (Reuters) - South African President Nelson Mandela embraced Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi on Wednesday and promised after private talks to see him again "in a few days." Dismissing US objections to the visit as morally unfounded, Mandela, now on his way to Edinburgh for today's opening of the Commonwealth summit, hailed Gaddafi as a hero of the struggle against apartheid and more of a friend of South Africa than Britain or the United States. Mandela rejected calls by the US to cancel the visit, which is his first since becoming president in 1994, but snubbed a United Nations air travel embargo by driving from the Tunisian side of the border about 160 km to Tripoli.

"This man helped us at a time when we were all alone, when those who say we should not come here were helping the enemy [South Africa's white government]," he told reporters after greeting Gaddafi with a hug and a kiss on each cheek. "Those who say I should not be here are without morals. I am not going to join them in their lack of morality."

Mandela said in a midnight speech after protracted private talks with Gaddafi: "I will be meeting my brother leader again in a few days." He told Reuters later the second meeting could be on his way back from next week's Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Edinburgh or "a little later." He declined to expand on the purpose of the meeting, except to say that while it arose out of his private talks with Gaddafi, the second encounter could "address issues independent of those discussed tonight."

Mandela said earlier he was hoping for movement in the stalemate between Libya and the US and Britain over the venue for the trial of two Libyan suspects in the 1988 bombing of a Pan-Am jet over Lockerbie in Scotland, which cost 270 lives.

"It would be premature now to say exactly how we are going to search for a solution. [We] feel that to maintain these sanctions is to punish the ordinary people of

Libya and that is why there is now great concern that the remaining sanctions must be lifted," he said.

He said South Africa supports the Organization of African Unity's call for a trial in a neutral third country and that he would seek to promote a resolution of the stalemate between Libya and the US and Britain at the Commonwealth summit.

Gaddafi reaffirmed in a 40-minute speech to banquet guests who waited more than four hours for their dinner that Libya would never surrender the Lockerbie suspects, who are under house arrest in their home country, to Britain or the US for trial.

He said that while the UN sanctions are hurting his country and his people, "they can never impose surrender. They can never make us capitulate."

Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Muammar told Reuters that though many African leaders had visited Tripoli over the past five years, Mandela was Gaddafi's most significant guest since the imposition of the UN air travel embargo in 1992.

"Mandela is one of the leaders of Africa and his coming here is, for us, just another support for the African position and our problem with the West. He is a man respected by all the world," he said.

He endorsed the sentiment of a banner hung over the road Mandela travelled saying "Mandela's visit to Libya is a devastating blow to America. President Mandela's action is a welcome defiance of one great power trying to impose a unilateral position on the rest of the world."

Muammar said he hopes Mandela's visit would help to normalize Libya's relations with the US and other countries, but said he fears that Washington is using the dispute over the venue for the trial of two Libyan terrorism suspects as an excuse to isolate his country.

No Western leader has visited Tripoli since Gaddafi, arguing they would not be treated fairly, refused to deliver the two Lockerbie suspects for trial in the US or Britain.

The Libyan leader has offered to



South African President Nelson Mandela (left) holds hands with his Libyan counterpart, Muammar Gaddafi, upon arrival in Tripoli Wednesday (AP)

send them for trial in a neutral country, a proposal rejected by London and Washington.

The United States has branded

Libya a terrorist state and, in line with its policy of discouraging trade or diplomatic relations, on Monday renewed its objection to

Mandela's visit.

Mandela has visited Libya twice since his release from jail in 1990 but not since becoming president.

Greenpeace slams US global warming plan

WASHINGTON - President Bill Clinton pledged on Wednesday to "harness the power of the free market" for an assault on greenhouse gas pollution, outlining a package of incentives and modest targets he says will counter global warming, while allowing businesses to prosper.

But Greenpeace called the proposals "totally unacceptable." "If it were adopted at the Kyoto conference on climate change, we would consider the agreement a failure," Kalle Kreider of Greenpeace said in a statement. "To respond with such complacency to climate change is to ignore the threat to human health and the environment." "We must begin now to take out our insurance policy on the future," Clinton told about 400 invited government officials and guests at the National Geographic Society's headquarters.

He said global warming "is real," and the "consequences, sooner or later, will be destructive for America and for the world."

Clinton outlined a strategy that beginning in 1998 would offer \$5 billion in tax breaks and other incentives to US companies to encourage rapid improvements in fuel efficiency and spur the development of new "clean-energy" technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

But the specific goals and timetables he proposed for cutting international emissions fall far short of what some scientists and many environmentalists say are needed. They also are considerably less ambitious than the

proposals proffered by other industrial powers.

The president's plan calls for stabilizing the industrialized world's output of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases at 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012 - followed by further, unspecified reductions by the year 2017. The European Union, by contrast, favors limiting emissions at 15 percent below 1990 levels by 2010.

Talks are under way this week in Bonn, Germany, to try to reach an agreement on an international plan to be signed in December in Kyoto, Japan. The treaty would set mandatory ceilings on emissions by nations around the world and impose penalties on countries that fail to comply.

Some business and labor groups say that even the relatively modest restrictions sought by Clinton would strangle the economic growth, raise energy prices and put millions of people out of work. But Clinton said his program would actually boost the economy by increasing efficiency and creating opportunities for new products and markets.

"If we do it right, protecting the climate will yield net costs, but profits, not burdens but benefits, not sacrifice, but a higher standard," he said.

White House officials portrayed the policy as "bold" and a "win-win," saying the tax breaks, flexible guidelines and other inducements would minimize the negative impact on industry and result in deep reductions in pollution before the mandatory limits even kick in.

(The Washington Post)

CIS summit brings harsh criticism; pledge to work harder

KISHINEV, Moldova (AP) - Leaders of former Soviet republics aimed harsh criticism at their own nebulous organization yesterday, blaming Russia most of all for the many shortcomings of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

"Serious criticism was addressed to Russia," President Boris Yeltsin said after meeting with leaders from the 11 other CIS members. They charged that "I, as chairman, and Russia as a whole are to blame that the CIS works irrationally and ineffectively." Yeltsin said the leaders made virtually no decisions at their meeting in the capital of tiny Moldova, instead handing all issues off to their prime ministers to work out and scheduling a new summit in exactly three months, on January 23.

The sorry state of the alliance, which has shown signs of coming apart at the seams, demands that its members take "serious measures so that the CIS not only survives and renews itself, but so that there can be no doubts about the existence of the CIS," Yeltsin said at a news conference.

Yeltsin began the summit by admitting that the alliance has largely failed and seeking to soothe what he said are fears among other member states that Moscow wants to use the organization to rebuild its empire.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin speaks to journalists at Kishinev's airport yesterday. In the background is Moldovan President Petru Lucinschi (AP)

in settling ethnic and regional disputes, its failure to improve economic ties and inability to fulfill the hundreds of agreements that have been signed by some or all of its members.

Yeltsin said the January summit will bring discussion of "a serious question of the reorganization of the work of the CIS." He added that no major changes will be made in the bureaucratic apparatus, but sternly warned that officials will be accountable for failure to implement decisions.

Moldovan President Petru Lucinschi said that the main aim of the summit will be to reach complete agreement on free trade among members of the CIS, which includes all the former Soviet republics except the three Baltic states.

"We decided that at the extraordinary session we will take one question, and apparently that will be the free-trade regime, and work in such a way that all 12 will sign," he said. He said many of the "800 or 1,000 CIS agreements have not implemented because not all the members signed them."

Leaders of CIS members have stressed the need to improve economic ties among their countries whose economies were tightly interconnected in the Soviet Union. Some have blamed separate, Russian-led groupings within the CIS for sagging trade figures.

Ginkgo extract shows benefit in slowing Alzheimer's

A popular herbal medicine derived from the leaves of ginkgo trees has a small but measurable effect on slowing the progression of Alzheimer's disease over the course of a year, according to the results of a new study.

The effect of the drug on Alzheimer's patients is more noticeable to family members than to doctors. Overall, it may delay a worsening of the disease by about six months. However, even the modest benefits were seen in only about one-third of patients.

"You need to be lucky to have this kind of improvement," said the study's lead researcher, Pierre L. Le Bars, of the New York Institute for Medical Research and New York University Medical Center's department of psychiatry.

"Although it has a reasonably modest effect, it could be meaningful to caregivers," said Marcelle Morrison-Bogorad, an Alzheimer's disease researcher at the National Institute on Aging at the National

Institutes of Health, who was not involved in the study.

"To have a plateau for six months and be able to interact with the person when they're still at a relatively early stage is something that many families would appreciate, I think." Between 6 percent and 8 percent of Americans over the age of 65 have Alzheimer's disease. The ailment begins with mild memory loss and often progresses to agitation, confusion, and physical dependency in its advanced stages. The average length of time from the appearance of symptoms to death is about eight years. There are no good treatments for it.

Ginkgo extract is the single biggest selling botanical drug in the world. In France and Germany, more than 10 million prescriptions for ginkgo-derived drugs are written every year. The substance's popularity is rapidly growing in the United States, although reliable estimates of

its use are not available.

Ginkgo extracts contain numerous chemical compounds whose biological properties fall into three main categories.

In the new study, published Wednesday in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 309 people were randomly assigned to receive either a ginkgo extract or a placebo for up to a year. The patients' average age was 69, and all had mild to moderate dementia caused either by Alzheimer's or in about 30 percent of cases, multiple small strokes.

If a participant worsened dramatically, he or she could drop out of the study and switch to the herbal medicine if desired. On average, people assigned to the ginkgo extract stayed in the study 39 weeks, and people assigned to placebo stayed in 35 weeks.

The researchers used three yardsticks to periodically assess a

The women fight for Ireland

It is always difficult to travel abroad when one's country is run by a buffoon. At home one can berate the charlatan along with everyone else - overseas begins that terrible struggle between honesty and patriotism.

There's that smarmy face from back home once again in the newspaper, or on television. There goes the insincere smirk, explaining his way out of the latest scandal with what you just know is a pack of lies, blaming everyone but himself and the sycophantic clowns he chose to surround himself with. The media. The opposition. They did it.

He rambles on with mock sincerity about pursuing a peace process everyone knows he's trying to torpedo, while all the power of government is focused only on keeping himself in power. One's media colleagues turn around with knowing grins and say, "So, what do you think of that? Does he really expect people to take him seriously?" Sheepishly, one lamely begins to defend the country rather than the man.

Ah yes! It wasn't easy being Irish abroad when Charles Haughey was prime minister in Dublin.

Thankfully we got rid of him and now he hits the news only for admitting involvement in some past funding scam which he indignantly denied at the time.

Shake-up

Haughey came unpleasantly back to mind on a recent trip to the Far East only because my foreign colleagues were blessedly more interested in Ireland's curious presidential election campaign, now in progress, than in quizzing me about the State of Israel.

It made me lamentably aware of how out of touch I had become with Irish affairs. On looking into it, I was intrigued to discover that a woman we dined with in Tel Aviv a few months ago is now in the race for the presidency of Ireland. Now try to guess which one.

This presidential election in Ireland (at the end of October) is extremely interesting and is shaking the country to its roots. It is fascinating and potentially very worrying for liberals who have believed for years that the days of the ultra-right national-religious camp were gone for good.

It has been Ireland's second economic miracle and the long cozy presidency of Mary Robinson that may have lulled the country into a false sense of security in its modernism, ultra-Europeanism, cultural renaissance, and general self-satisfaction.

Sucking sound

No one put it better than columnist Fintan O'Toole in

Column One



Thomas O'Dwyer

The Irish Times: "When she left the presidency, Mary Robinson created not just a vacancy but a vacuum. A vacancy is a quiet, harmless absence... And vacuums are dangerous and unstable. They exert an unpredictable force, sucking in strange pieces of the surrounding landscape."

Now, the presidency of Ireland is like the presidency of Israel - it is ceremonial and without power. But like Israel, Ireland has been blessed in filling this office with giants of the time who have brought the office a prestige and influence far beyond the constitutional provisions.

The most recent was Robinson, the first woman in the job, a surprising breath of modern fresh air who turned out to be a treasure not only in Ireland, but on the international stage. Now Ireland has to face the shock of her leaving and the political knives are out with a vengeance for this non-political office.

Four of the five candidates are women, all trying to be Mary Robinson Mark II and fooling nobody.

Wrong song

The Eurovision singer Dana (Rosemary Scallon) was treated as a joke showbiz candidate at first. But she has emerged as a front for the religious right wing, slipped in by a caucus of conservative municipal councillors. She brings a nasty whiff of winy American right-wing religious fundamentalism to Ireland.

The solid European center is held by opposition Fine Gael party nominee Mary Banotti - a member of the European Parliament and the only candidate to have won an election fight - three of them in fact. A refreshingly sane and political experienced idealist (not ideologue), she represents the Ireland most of us thought we belonged to - cultured, secular, social democratic, and, above all, modern European. She debates with the public on the internet.

The ruling Fianna Fail Party asounded everyone by refusing to back its former leader and prime minister, Albert Reynolds, opting instead for a law professor, Mary McAleese. She quickly became front runner, but this week is fighting off a scandal over accusations (denied) that she is sweet on Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA.

The left-wing Labor Party chose aid worker and environmentalist Adri Roche.

A late entry - and the only man - former policeman Derek Nally is a charmer who hopes to route the ladies by sheer hard work. Not many experts give him a chance.

So did you guess which candidate was recently in Tel Aviv? Yes, it was of course the European modernist, Mary Banotti.

Date set for czar's funeral

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV

MOSCOW (AP) - After a long debate, the Russian government has finally set a date next spring for the burial of the remains of the last czar, Nicholas II, and his family, a newspaper said yesterday - but the place still has not been decided.

A government commission set the burial for March 1, a Russian Orthodox holiday called Forgiveness Sunday when believers repent for their sins, the busi-

ness daily *Kommersant* reported, citing unidentified government officials.

According to the report, the government insists on burial in the Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul in St. Petersburg, where all Russian czars have been interred since Peter the Great.

But it has come under strong pressure from local officials in the Urals, who want the royal family to be buried in the city of Yekaterinburg, where they were slain by a Bolshevik firing squad in 1918.

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NEWS in FOCUS

The Jerusalem Post Friday, October 24, 1997

77 The Jerusalem Post
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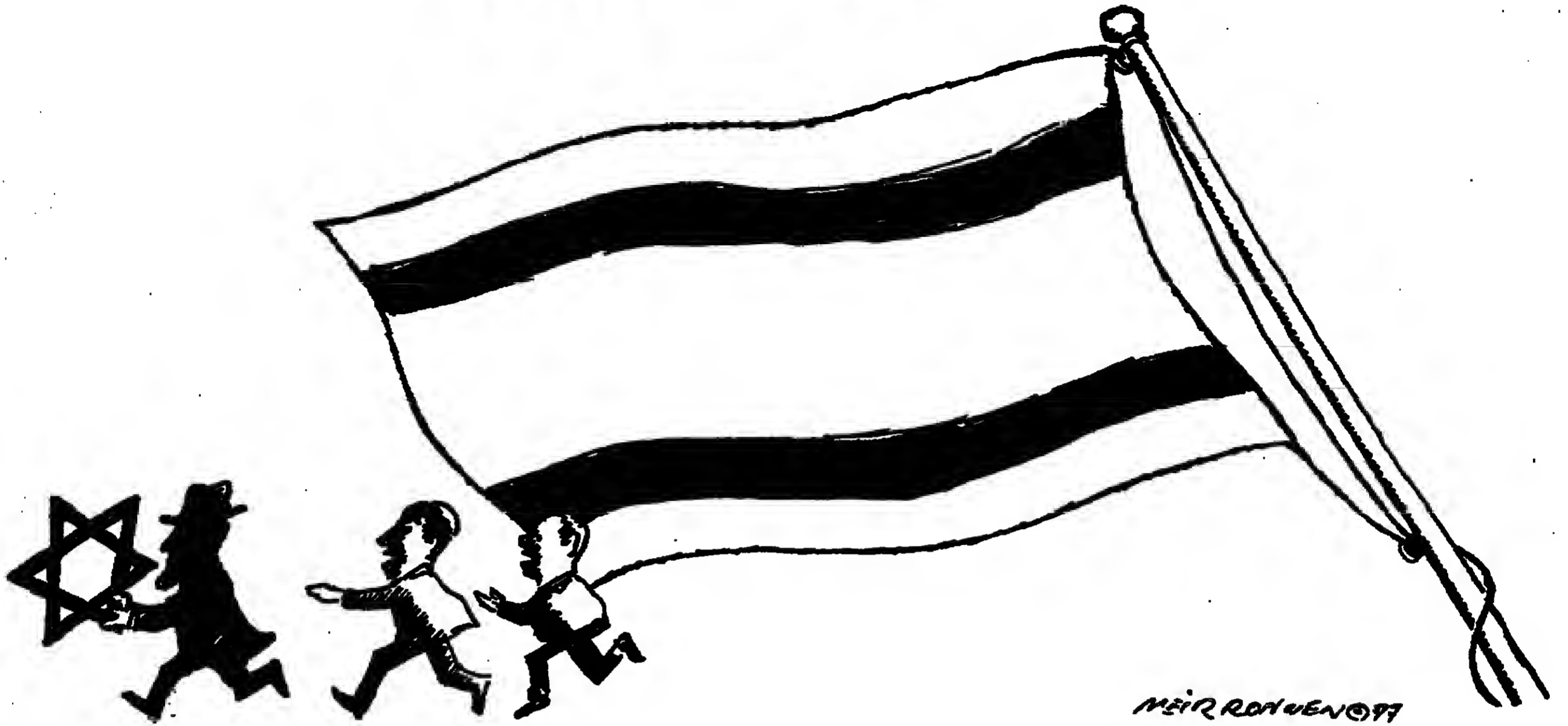
The Irish Times:
"When she left the presidency, Mary Robinson created not just a vacancy but a vacuum. The vacancy is a quiet, haunting presence. And vacuum is dangerous and unstable. The prospect of an unpredictable, uncontrollable force sticking in some pieces of the surrounding landscape."
Now, the presidency of Ireland is like the presidency of Israel - it is emotional and without power. In like Israel, Ireland has been blessed in filling the office with someone who has brought the office a prestige and influence far beyond its constitutional provisions."
The most recent was Robinson, the first woman to hold the job, a surprising blend of modern freshness and traditional to be a treasure not only in Ireland, but on the international stage. Now Ireland has to face the shock of her leaving and the political knives are out with vengeance for this non-political office.
Four of the five candidates are women, all trying to be Mary Robinson. Mark II is fooling nobody.

Wrong song
The Eurovision singer De Rosemary Scallon was once a joke about her candidature. But she has emerged front for the religious right wing, slipped in by a conservative ministerial ally. She brings a message of whiny American-style religious fundamentalism to Ireland.

The solid European...
The ruling...
The left...

ezar's funeral
The funeral of...
The funeral...

heimer's
The funeral of...
The funeral...



MEIR RONEN ©97

The conversion bill showdown

Attempts to find a compromise on the conversion bill have so far been unsuccessful. Reform and Conservative leaders put the blame on the Orthodox for the lack of progress. Haim Shapiro reports

No responsible Jewish leader wants it to happen, but the anger abroad against Israel over the conversion issue could be expressed by Diaspora Jews through their pocketbooks, and through a loss of political support for Israel, particularly in the US, says Rabbi Richard Hirsch, executive director of the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

That anger is likely to be vented at the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations, which is to be held in Indianapolis next month. The federations are mainly led by members of Conservative and Reform congregations, who have been outspoken in their criticism of action which they see as delegitimizing their movements in Israel.

Prime Minister Netanyahu is likely to receive a less than warm reception, especially if the conversion bill and a planned law regarding religious councils are passed. The conversion bill would, in effect, deny recognition to conversions performed by Conservative and Reform rabbis in Israel. The religious council law would keep Conservative and Reform representatives out of the religious councils.

The committee headed by Finance Minister Yankov Neeman has been trying to find a compromise to the conversion issue, but so far its proposed guidelines have been rejected by the Chief Rabbinate, which would have to be a key body in implementing them. Conservative and Reform leaders in Israel say that they will not wait any longer to go forward with their petitions to the High Court to force the Interior Ministry to register their converts as Jews, a move that would probably result in a hasty attempt to push through the conversion bill.

Netanyahu's adviser on Diaspora Jewry, Bobby Brown, said this week that Netanyahu is still planning to address the General Assembly as scheduled on November 16. In the past, Netanyahu has shied away from attending mass gatherings where he would have had to face a hostile non-Orthodox audience.

"He is saying he will go,"

Brown said, adding quickly that it was always possible that the prime minister might have to cancel his appearance because of some crisis.

Brown also insisted that it would be unwise for the Conservative and Reform to go ahead with their court action. All it would do, he warned, would be to hasten passage of the conversion bill. He said that the Neeman Committee was still the best vehicle with which to reach some sort of understanding.

"There are new directions and new proposals on how to make progress," Brown said.

However, Rabbi Ehud Bandel, president of the Conservative movement in Israel, said this week

"It is no accident that the issue of religion and state in Israel is of vast concern to diaspora Jews and of relatively little concern to secular Jews in Israel"

- Rabbi Richard Hirsch, executive director of the World Union for Progressive Judaism

that so far he and his Reform colleagues have heard no new proposals. He saw no compromise in sight and no reason to delay the court action, which has already been postponed for several months.

Hirsch, who is a member of the executive of the World Zionist Organization, on the board of the Jewish Agency, and the immediate past president of the Zionist General

Council, said that as the immediate result of the failure of the government to reach a compromise over the conversion issue, there could well be divergence between the government and the Jewish Agency, with the government supporting Orthodox institutions and the Jewish Agency supporting the Conservative and Reform.

"There could be a situation where the government goes in one direction and the Jewish Agency goes in another," he said this week.

The government, he said, had been influenced by the religious parties far beyond what their proportional support warranted, giving in on political issues and providing economic support. The Diaspora, and particularly American Jewry, was concerned about the character of the State of Israel. It was no accident, he said, that the issue of religion and state in Israel was of vast concern to Diaspora Jews and of relatively little concern to secular Jews in Israel.

Hirsch noted the recent elections in the US for representatives to the World Zionist Organization, in which the Reform Zionist movement won 47 percent of the votes, while the Conservative Zionist movement gained 26%. That meant, he said, that three quarters of American Jewry identified with non-Orthodox religious movements.

Against this was the reaction last week of the chief rabbis and the religious parties, who rejected the proposed guidelines of the committee headed by Finance Minister Neeman over the conversion issue. The committee had worked toward a central conversion institute that would deal with candidates from all streams of Judaism, but with the actual conversion ceremony carried out by an Orthodox rabbinical court. It had also suggested that non-Orthodox rabbis be allowed to perform marriages, with two official "witnesses" representing the chief rabbinate.

Hirsch said the guidelines represented substantial compromises by the non-Orthodox. It was not easy for them, he said, to agree that their rabbis would not perform conversions in Israel or that marriages would have to take place in the presence of what amounted to official supervisors. However, he had seen no similar concessions by the Orthodox.

"I think it is a great tragedy that the Orthodox have not given an affirmative response to the general guidelines of the Neeman Committee," Hirsch said.

He greatly admired Neeman, he admitted, who understands the potential deleterious consequences

of failing to come to some sort of solution to the problem. Unfortunately, he added, the Orthodox establishment leadership and the rabbinical establishment continue to condemn and make false accusations against the "two majority movements in Jewish life."

He added, "They have a narrow, exclusivist anachronistic view of world Jewry and of Judaism."

On the other hand, he said, world Jewry and the State of Israel had an inclusive view, one that had resulted in the Law of Return, giving automatic citizenship to anyone who had even one Jewish grandparent. This, in turn, had led to the immigration of some 150,000 people

from the former Soviet Union who, according to the Yisrael Ba'aliya party, are not Jews.

The root of the problem, Hirsch said, lay in the fact that the Orthodox establishment, instead of welcoming these people and encouraging them to identify as Jews, had adopted a policy that kept them from becoming Jews unless they adopted the most stringent view of Judaism. If the Orthodox had seen this as a human problem, making the immigrants part of Jewish life in Israel, the problem would not have arisen, Hirsch insisted.

According to statistics released by the rabbinical establishment

itself, fewer than 1,000 people were converted to Judaism last year, he noted.

The Orthodox establishment had rejected the Neeman Committee guidelines, he said, not because they cared about individuals but because they were concerned about retaining control of religious institutions in Israel, he charged.

"At issue is what is to be the Jewish character of the State of Israel. Is it to be a state of Jews, or is it to be a state of Orthodox monopolistic control over Judaism?" he said.

Meanwhile, despite the general mood of pessimism, the Reform and Conservative leaders say they are still committed to continuing their work within the Neeman Committee.

"The committee is continuing to work. We are still determined to reach a positive conclusion to the work of the committee," Bandel said.

Most American Jews: Simply indifferent to Israel

The impression one might get is that American Jews, angry and frustrated over the conversion legislation, are taking to the barricades. But it seems more likely that they are taking a hike.

The position of Jewish institutions is widening the distance between Israel and American Jews, while the migration of the Reform and Conservative movements find little support in the conversion issue.

"The synagogue is illegitimate, this you are, throws into utter confusion," said Rabbi Eric Yoffe, head of the Reform movement.

"We can't risk making people choose between the synagogue and the State of Israel," said Murray Lashit, an Orthodox Jew who is president of the MetroWest Federation in New Jersey.

Left unsaid is that given such a choice, the synagogue will win. Although measuring support for Israel is dicey, the available barometers indicate that American Jews are increasingly

indifferent to Israel. However, they may be by punishment. The recent election to the World Zionist Congress in October gave the Conservative movement the far dominant force in American Jewry to meet their outrage against Israel's policies, and the Reform movement the right to get their constituent constituents out to vote.

But of an estimated six million Jews in the US, only 150,000 registered to vote and of those, only 111,000 cast ballots. The Reform and Conservative movements won some 79,000 votes, which gave them bragging rights as the representatives of American Jewry - at least those who could be mobilized.

In fact, though the Zionist Congress election was the most recent opportunity for Jews to

According to a survey of American Jewish leadership conducted by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, support for Israel is declining.

The survey found that support for Israel is declining among American Jews, particularly among the younger generation.

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Barak's conversion dilemma

Shas Party leader Aryeh Deri has thrown out some bait to snare a big fish - Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak. But based on conversations with Labor Party figures in the past few days, it looks like Barak - with a little prodding from his friends - is not going to bite.

During a meeting held in the succa of Shas spiritual mentor Rabbi Ovadia Yosef late last week, Deri told Barak that if he was sincere about wanting Labor to turn a new leaf in relations with the Sephardim and the Orthodox, he should back two bills being pushed by the religious parties.

The first aims to prevent Reform and Conservative rabbis in Israel from converting non-

response to Deri's demands, that he intended to distance the party from Meretz.

At the time of his apology, many observers wrote that Barak would have to back his words with actions to lend them credibility. It seems that Deri hopes to call to his first markers over the conversion and religious council bills.

The latest crisis over the controversial legislation began less than two weeks ago with news that the two chief rabbis, Eliahu Bakshi-Doron and Yisrael Lau, and the three Orthodox Knesset factions - Shas, the United Torah Judaism Party and the National Religious Party - had rejected a compromise formula for allowing Reform- and Conservative-con-

Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak must woo religious parties if he wants to be Israel's next prime minister. But can he afford to anger Jews abroad by backing demands to outlaw Reform and Conservative conversions? Dan Izenberg analyzes the party's position

believe the voices of those opposed to teaming up with the Orthodox against pluralism will be stronger. Anyone who wants to take that path will not be able to lead the Labor Party."

MK Ori Orr spoke out strongly for a compromise along the lines of the Neeman Committee. The compromise calls for halachic conversion based on the participation and cooperation of all three religious streams.

Reform and Conservative rabbis abroad. "Conversion should be Orthodox," but the solution must not be politically imposed," Hacohen said.

Neeman's call for a form of conversion that would be overseen by all three religious streams is not new, Hacohen asserted. He said the idea was proposed 20 years ago and then rejected by the Orthodox at the last minute.

People who want to convert and

"If Labor votes against us on these bills, the party can forget about forming a coalition with us - in this world, or in the world to come"

Jews. The second seeks to ban Reform and Conservative membership on religious councils.

One senior Shas official reportedly put it this way: "If Labor votes against us on these bills, the party can forget about forming a coalition with us - in this world, or in the world to come."

Deri had good reason to believe that the threat would not fall on deaf ears, as Barak has made no secret that he wants to try and change Labor's political, social and religious alignments so he can win the next election.

His recent apology to Sephardic immigrants for their suffering as newcomers in the 1950s and 1960s was a first step in that direction. That move was soon followed by an announcement, in

ducted conversion and Reform- and Conservative-officiated weddings.

The formula had been drawn up by a seven-man committee led by Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman. The committee was established last June to head off the threat of a rupture between Israel and non-Orthodox Jews abroad over the conversion bill. The committee agreed twice to extend the deadline for deliberations originally set for August 15. The latest expiration date is today.

The crisis has been heightened by the fact that the High Court of Justice was to bear a petition in the coming week by the Reform and Conservative movements, who want to see their representa-

tives seated on religious councils in Jerusalem, Haifa, Tel Aviv and Kiryat Tivon.

Orthodox parties have already drafted a transitional bill freezing all appointments to the councils until they are reconstituted to exclude the non-Orthodox. The parties have also demanded immediate Knesset approval of both the conversion and transitional religious councils bill.

If ever Barak wanted to prove in the Orthodox parties that he was their friend, this would be a fine time. But Barak cannot afford to do it. In all fairness, he probably wouldn't like to meet their demands in this case. But he seems to be trying to adopt the most conciliatory and statesmanlike tone possible to keep alive hopes of a future political alliance with the haredim.

During his meeting with Yosef, Barak, the former commander-in-chief who wants to promote himself as the country's guarantor of security, explained that his stance on the status of the Reform and Conservative movements was anchored in his concern for a safe Israel.

"The overriding need is for a secure and strong Israel, and to achieve that, we need a united Jewish nation," he said,

in a statement carefully crafted to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative. "That can only be achieved by compromise."

When it comes to the conversion issue, Barak is not personally concerned about the details of a compromise. His only conditions are that a formula be acceptable to both sides, and that the feelings of Reform and Conservative communities in the Diaspora be taken into account.

"We cannot accept a situation which will create divisiveness and rift within the Jewish nation," he said.

With regard to the religious councils, Barak has made sure to stress that he favors a solution proposed by none other than Deri himself when he was interior minister - to eliminate the religious councils and transfer their responsibilities to the local councils, where most political and ideological streams tend to be represented.

In the immediate future, the only apparent way to achieve a compromise that would grant some recognition to the Reform and Conservative movements in the conversion process and restructure the provision of religious services, is to continue the discussions.

"We must continue the cease-fire," said Yaron Jacobs, Barak's adviser on religious affairs, referring to an agreement reached back in June to refrain from taking any controversial steps on issues dividing the Orthodox and non-Orthodox movements.

Continuing the "cease-fire" means that the Reform and Conservative movements should postpone their petitions to the Supreme Court and give the Neeman Committee more time.

Jacobs said that the committee wasn't able to complete its work after a crisis that erupted after some of their ideas were leaked.

"We believe that it's possible to reach a compromise. Any decision that does not involve compromise is a bad decision," Jacobs said.

The difference between Barak and his colleagues is not so much in substance as in tone, yet it reveals a contrast in attitudes regarding hopes for a potential political alliance with the Orthodox.

"We must vote against both laws and we must say so in the clearest possible way," says MK Uzi Baram, who has just returned from a trip to the United States where he saw first-hand, the anger in the Reform and Conservative commu-

nities over the proposed legislation.

"Barak wants to gain time in order to forge a compromise. My position is that even if we want a compromise - which I don't - we should start out by presenting our ultimate demands."

Baram said he did not believe there was any hope of attracting Orthodox voters to Labor with or without supporting these bills. "They are devoted to the Likud," he said. "Barak is wrong. He doesn't know them," added MK Haggai Merom. "I am absolutely opposed to the conversion and religious councils bills and will do everything I can to see that the Labor Party does not support them."

"There is no other way of looking at the bills but as severing ourselves from Reform and Conservative Jewry abroad, which I regard as a catastrophe. The day that the Labor movement leads a hand to such legislation, it ceases to be a liberal, pluralist and Zionist party," Merom said. He understands the dilemma posed by Shas' threat but has no problem rejecting it.

"I don't believe that political self-interest should be the only consideration," he said. "There must be principles at the basis of any political move."

But even if political self-interest were the determining factor, it would make no difference according to Merom, who regards Labor support for the Orthodox parties over this issue as "a momentary collaboration which will not endure."

Merom believes that Barak is trying to form some alliance with the Orthodox parties, but that he lacks the political strength to do so. "Barak will not go as far as he would like to," said Merom. "I



Orr said that under no circumstances would Labor vote for a law that could alienate 75 percent of Jews abroad.

"Why should we be the ones to take Netanyahu's iron out of the fire," Orr said. "After all, we are in the opposition. It's the prime minister's problem. It might be a different matter if we were the government and on our way to a peace treaty with the Arabs when Shas threatened to topple us if we voted against the laws."

"But that is not the case," Orr continued. "Why do we have to help Netanyahu out?"

Even former Labor MK and Orthodox Rabbi Menachem

then join the Reform stream should be encouraged to do so, Hacohen said. He also maintained that the "enormous" problem of intermarriage among diaspora Jews "was not caused by the Reform movement."

"Most of those who intermarry are completely cut off from Judaism. Those who want to convert indicate that they do care about Judaism. I don't want to alienate them," Hacohen added. "This issue is critical to the Jewish nation. It could create a deep fissure."

With regard to Barak, Hacohen said he believes that the party chairman "does not understand the religious and baredi population, just like Peres did out. Whoever understands the world view of the haredim knows that

"The day that the Labor movement lends a hand to such legislation, it ceases to be a liberal, pluralist and Zionist party"



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מזכירות האגודה

Dancing on thin ice

An Israeli belly dancer's accusation of attempted rape against popular Egyptian ambassador Mohammed Bassiouny produced shock waves here and in Egypt.

Michal Yudelman examines possible effects of the scandal on Egyptian-Israeli relations and the local diplomatic scene

THE story has all the makings of a joint Arab-Israeli soap opera.

There's a foreign ambassador, a sex scandal, a glimpse into the world of Israel's social elite, hints of international intrigue and conspiracy.

At the heart of the matter is Egyptian Ambassador Mohammed Bassiouny, the most high-profile diplomat in Israel, who has been here for more than 17 years.

Bassiouny, who is extremely popular in high society circles, was accused of attempted rape by a belly dancer whose identity is protected behind the code name "Alef." Bassiouny countered with his own charge of attempted blackmail and hinted that the affair was part of a larger political conspiracy against him. Bassiouny was cleared of all charges last week, but the affair has left a cloud over the senior ambassador's diplomatic career and has aggravated the already strained relations between Israel and Egypt.

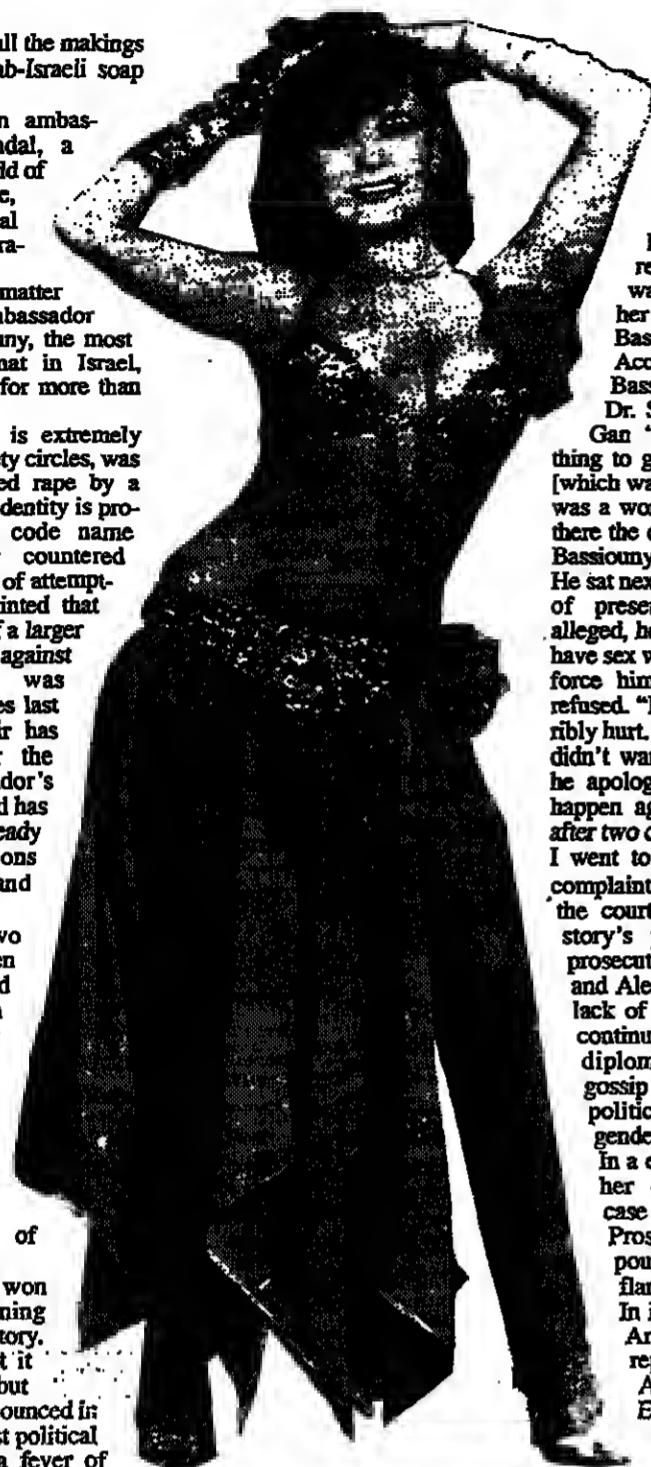
It all began two months ago when rumors circulated about an assignation between Bassiouny and a belly dancer in the Ramat Gan apartment of his friend, Doctor Yehoshafat Shulman, after which the dancer made allegations of attempted rape.

Police sought and won a court order banning publication of the story. That may have kept it out of the media, but under the surface it bounced in and out of the highest political windows, creating a fever of concern. President Weizman, Prime Minister Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Levy held consultations on how to handle the affair, and decided to gag it for fear of damaging relations with Egypt. It was also feared that the Egyptians would draw a connection between the Bassiouny affair and the recent conviction of Israeli Azzam Azzam in Egypt for espionage. It was assumed that this would heap more difficulties in the way of getting Azzam released.

Police officers discreetly investigated Alef's charge and questioned Bassiouny - who was legally shielded by diplomatic immunity. He admitted knowing the belly dancer but vehemently denied trying to force himself on her. But police also followed up a suspicion that the dancer and one of her friends might be trying to blackmail the ambassador.

The dancer claimed to police that Shulman had offered her several thousand dollars to keep the story to herself, and that Bassiouny's wife, Nagua, had also tried to buy her silence. Shulman denied this and Nagua said Alef tried to blackmail her.

About a month ago, Bassiouny complained publicly of harassment "by official Israeli elements." In an



Belly dancing is an art, and not an invitation to harassment. (The dancer shown here is not 'Alef'.)

Alef, in turn, also proved adept at using the media. In interviews she gave which were published only after the ban was lifted last week, she said she realized police pressure was intended to "persuade" her to drop charges against Bassiouny. She refused.

According to Alef's story, Bassiouny asked her to go to Dr. Shulman's flat in Ramat Gan "because he had something to give me for my birthday [which was on that day]." He said it was a work proposal. When I got there the doctor wasn't home, and Bassiouny told me he was abroad. He sat next to me and gave me lots of presents. After that, she alleged, he tried to persuade her to have sex with him and then tried to force himself on her when she refused. "I felt humiliated and terribly hurt. A man in his position - I didn't want to cross him. Finally he apologized and said it won't happen again. I went home, but after two days I felt I was bursting. I went to the police and filed a complaint." At the end of last week the court lifted the ban on the story's publication. The state prosecutor said both Bassiouny's and Alef's files were closed for lack of evidence. But the affair continues to have social and diplomatic reverberations as gossip swirls about conspiracy, political white-washing, and gender discrimination.

In a clumsy attempt to justify her decision to close the case against Bassiouny, State Prosecutor Edna Arbel poured more fuel on the flames herself.

In interviews last weekend, Arbel tried to ward off reports that she, or Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein, had been pressured to close the affair.

Women's Network's legal team, attorney Rivka Meller-Olshitzky, regretted "that Arbel spoke in the stereotypical terms usually used by those who justify sexual aggression against women." Esther Eilam, an activist in the Rape Crisis Center, said it was the dancer's right to go wherever she wanted, wearing whatever she wanted, without being sexually molested. "This right is indivisible," asserted Eilam, author of Rape Survivors, Rape Crimes and the Authorities, published by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies (1995).

"It's the attitude that what she was wearing had anything to do with it, and the implication that she brought it on herself, that's so infuriating," she said. "It's hard to believe that after everything we've done, after treating thousands of rape victims, there is still such a gap between all the information we've been spreading and the prevailing conceptions. Sexism is so deeply rooted that even women are not immune to it. It's no accident that the woman is the one sacrificed for the loftier interests of the state," Eilam commented. "I just wonder if the authorities would have treated the parties involved in the same way had Bassiouny been an ordinary citizen of no social or diplomatic status." Belly dancers were furious. "Belly dancing is an art and part of our culture," said Bracha Cohen, a belly dancer who has also been teaching it for 20 years. "It's so more provocative than ballet or jazz dancing, and the clothes are certainly no skimpier than in any other form of dance. When have you last seen a show of Bat Sheva? Have you seen what they're wearing?" But, she stressed, "That's not the point. The point is that even if a woman wears something which is perceived as provocative, it's no excuse to rape her." Cohen was especially incensed by Arbel's implication that because of her skimpy attire

The court order banning publication of the story kept it out of the media, but at the highest political level, it created a fever of concern. President Ezer Weizman, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister David Levy decided to gag the story for fear of damaging relations with Egypt

interview with Yediot Aharonot's Smadar Pezi, he charged that his car had been searched, he was getting anonymous telephone calls in the middle of the night, and that a group of extreme right-wingers was demonstrating outside his residence with police permission. "My suitcases are packed. I'm ready to leave at any moment," he said.

Predictably, the story roused anger in Egypt, which officially had kept mum to that point. President Hosni Mubarak threatened that if the harassment did not cease, "we'll have to consider our options," Yediot Aharonot reported. The harassment against Bassiouny ceased and police detained Alef and one of her friends. They interrogated her for 10 hours on suspicion of trying to blackmail the ambassador.

Arbel said that even Alef's version of what happened indicated that no criminal offense was involved. She said the dancer had gone voluntarily to the tryst with Bassiouny in "sheer and skimpy" clothing and "knew what she was getting into." The comments sent shockwaves through women's organizations, legal circles, and the belly dancers' community. Professor Alice Shalvi, chairman of the Israel Women's Network, said "Arbel's statement implies that a woman who comes to somebody's home dressed in certain clothes should know what she's in for. I find that unacceptable. The tendency to blame the victim in cases of sexual assault is neither reasonable nor fair. It does not matter what a woman is wearing, if she says clearly that she is not interested in sex." The head of the

Alef had no case, and that this was part of the reason for closing it. Realizing her error, Arbel hastened to issue a correction, saying her comment had been taken out of context. She stressed that "whether a woman wears revealing or other attire, I don't think it condones any kind of act against her." Arbel explained: "It's hard to get into details without violating privacy. We mentioned her clothing as one of the things to be taken into consideration. But I stressed we had determined there was no use of force or violence and no sexual contact. There was no rape or attempted rape. The complaint referred to indecent acts, but no such acts took place in the legal sense of the term. That's what I tried to explain. I didn't say a girl mustn't wear one kind of clothing or another."



Will scandal spoil Bassiouny's career?

A former senior Israeli ambassador believes that the affair with the belly dancer will have an effect on Ambassador Bassiouny's diplomatic career. "This affair brings no honor either to Bassiouny or to Egypt, regardless of whether he is telling the truth or not," he said.

In the past, when an ambassador's position was compromised, the circumstances were entered in his personal record. Even if no immediate action was taken against him, a scandal would shorten the ambassador's term and in some cases delay or completely suspend his promotion and career, the former ambassador said.

He cited the case of an Israeli ambassador in Cyprus who was hauled out of a bar reeling drunk. "The ministry didn't recall him that very month, but it decided to bring him back as soon as the fuss died down," he recalled.

There is no doubt that under normal circumstances, an ambassador involved in possible scandal or alleged crime is called home to explain himself and after six months or so, his term is suddenly ended. At least that's how it's done in Israel, he said.

However, Bassiouny's case might be an exception due to the unusual state of affairs between

Israel and Egypt, the former ambassador believes. In view of the distrust and tension between the two states, Bassiouny may manage to convince his ministry superiors that the affair is a slanderous conspiracy against him. This will still be difficult because he cannot deny being in that apartment with the dancer and would have to explain why, the former envoy said. It should be noted, he added, that the Egyptian Foreign Ministry is run extremely professionally and to exacting standards.

Apart from the effect of such an affair on the ambassador's career record, it will hinder his work. "His wife is involved in his activities, and this is bound to affect at least their professional partnership."

Romantic affairs and sex scandals involving diplomats are not uncommon, but ambassadors are trained to beware of what was known in Cold War days as the "honey trap" - falling for an attractive local person who was probably a planted agent. Bassiouny, as an experienced career diplomat and former intelligence officer, should have known better. Hence there is no excuse for what Bassiouny got involved in, the former envoy said.

- M.Y.

A diplomat's paradise

Israel is regarded as a diplomat's paradise, and many ambassadors have asked to extend their term here or to be reassigned to Israel, a second time. Foreign diplomats on arrival are immediately embraced by Israel's high society. They become celebrities and are included on every Who's Who guest list for a never-ending run of parties, gala opening nights, receptions and dinners.

The Bassiouny's, both outgoing envoys and diplomats of the first major Arab state to recognize Israel, have taken to the local social frenzy like ducks to water. From the start, the couple has been among the most courted and popular diplomats here, hosting balls and major media-covered social events for 17 years. The Bassiouny's sources command the attendance of anybody who's anybody in Israeli society, from President Ezer and Reuma Weizman, to ministers and Knesset members to the

moovers and shakers of business, culture and media. They all just had to be at the Bassiouny's lavish banquets, which earned the reputation as affairs out of the Arabian Nights, not just for the sumptuous spread of Egyptian and Middle Eastern delicacies, but for the entertainment as well.

These parties usually culminated with a thrilling performance by an exotic belly dancer. It was at one of his own parties that Bassiouny met Alef, the belly dancer.

- M.Y.

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مركزنا للتأهيل

MIDDLE ISRAEL



By AMOTZ ASA-EL

Having delivered, in 1726, a complex Talmudic sermon in a synagogue packed with vintage Livvak scholars, the six-year-old Elijah of Vilna immediately became a myth.

of Russia in the east and Poland in the west - Elijah established himself as his generation's superior Judaic authority, even though he never assumed public office nor donned any official title.

Understandably, then, when a newly independent Lithuania recently marked, amid some pomp and circumstance, the Gaon's 200th yahrzeit, controversy focused on the post-communist republic's ulterior motives - considering its reluctance to hold its sinister Nazi-era record - rather than on its selection of the Gaon's Lebenskraft as a symbol of its glorious Jewish past.

And yet there is a strange discrepancy between the warm embrace of the Gaon by Gentiles and the conspicuous silence with which we Israelis treat his legacy.

18th-century Vilnius anchored a culture war highlighted by synagogue closures, public book-burnings, and, ultimately, full excommunication of the rapidly growing movement's followers.

Surely, the Gaon's hot pursuit was not shorn of its theological rationale. Unlike the type of intellectually driven leadership which he embodied, Hassidism offered a charismatic alternative whereby rabbis purported to perform miracles, encouraged self-expression through ecstatic singing and dancing, and offered a quasi-Catholic mortal intermediary between man and God.

Revolution's leaders were busy emancipating the Jews, and to Berlin, where Moses Mendelssohn was translating the Bible into a Hebrew-transliterated German, thus building the other end of a Jewish-Gentile bridge which eventually would pose the truly potent, long-term threat to the Gaon's brand of Judaism.

Besides being unjustified, the Gaon's war was also unwise. It ignored the malaise of masses of persecuted, downtrodden and undereducated Jews who could scarcely relate to the rabbi's Talmudic hair-splitting, much less find in it solace for the gloomy lives they were leading.

would-be gaons as NRP and Shas rabbis Avraham Shapira and David Yosef, who said non-Orthodoxy "has nothing to do with Judaism."

Yosef has no more than a nodding acquaintance with American Jewry and has yet to sift through the writings of such non-Orthodox rabbinical luminaries as Solomon Schechter, Abraham Joshua Heschel and Mordecai Kaplan, all of whom could have taught him a thing or two about the very Judaism he so brazenly seeks to monopolize.

As for Shapira, his failure to become a public figure even during a decade-long tenure as chief rabbi speaks volumes for his inactivity - just like the mimagdim in their time - to connect with the broad public outside his immediate pale.

Dry Bones



SHABBAT SHALOM



By SHLOMO RUSKIN

'In the beginning...'

Breakit

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. 1:1)

Undoubtedly, Judaism believes in one deity who cannot be grasped by human intellect. Nevertheless, God does reveal different aspects of His ineffable being to His human creations, and these must be understood and even acted upon.

These practical but important facets of the Divine essence are expressed by the different names used to designate the Almighty. Rashi was very much aware of this descriptive function of the names, which he comments on in his opening commentary on the verse, "In the beginning God [Elokim] created the heaven and the earth."

Rashi writes: "It does not state Lord [JHWH], the four-letter name because at first God [Elohim, Judge] intended to create [the world] with the attribute of strict justice. However, the Almighty realized that the world could not endure in such a mode, and therefore gave precedence to Divine mercy (rachamim), uniting it with Divine justice. That is why we find one chapter later: 'And these are the generations of the heaven and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God [JHWH] made the earth and the heavens.'" (Gen. 2:4)

What does Rashi mean? Why couldn't the world endure under the rule of Divine justice?

A world run in accordance with Divine justice would mean that as soon as someone does wrong, punishment is meted out. We would never have to ask why bad things happen to good people because an evil act would be stopped in its tracks; after all, an innocent person's suffering would violate the principle of Divine justice.

Simply stated, the human being, a creature who makes choices either learns from his mistakes or is "doomed to repeat them" either succumbing or not succumbing to temptation.

Man could not exist as anything more than a pawn if Divine justice ruled the world. There would be no room for the wavering personality torn between two equally compelling choices.

the innocent suffering in a world which is often unfair. God's only guarantee in the Bible is that the Jews will never be destroyed, and will ultimately redeem this world, and the Sages add that all the righteous will ultimately be rewarded in the world to come (B.T. Yoma 68b).

In accordance with this theology, a Hassidic teaching provides an alternative way of reading the first three words in the Torah, which says the words can also be understood as: "God created beginning," i.e., new beginnings, start-overs, renewed opportunities.

Anyone who has attended second or third marriages between widowed and/or divorced people understand the significance of the opportunity provided by "another chance." Free will, the making of our own choices, implies that sometimes mistakes will be made. But instead of Divine Justice descending like a bolt of lightning, Divine Mercy emerges to absorb the lethal charge.

This means we always have another chance to better ourselves. And isn't this after all what "beginnings" are all about? True repentance means carving out a new beginning for oneself.

Beginnings, therefore, go hand in hand with Divine Mercy, and Divine Faith in the human personality to recreate him/herself and forge a new destiny.

In fact, if we forget for a moment the account of Adam and Eve as an esoteric tale of good and evil, but instead concentrate on the basic outline of the story, we find a domestic tragedy (as pointed out by Elie Wiesel). A man and a woman had two sons. To their horror, one turned out to be a murderer, and the other son was murdered.

What happens to such parents? How do they go on with their lives? Clearly, they could be in mourning for the rest of their lives, brooding about the sheer waste of it all. But what do these first two parents do? They have a third son, Seth!

This idea fits well with Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik's understanding of Rashi's comment as to why the Torah begins with creation when it could have gone straight to the first commandment (Exodus 12:2).

The Rav answers Rashi by claiming that the opening phrase also reflects the most fundamental commandment in the Torah, the commandment of walking in the path of God: just as He creates, so are we commanded to create. And what is it that He created?

First and foremost He created a beginning, the opportunity to make another effort. Indeed, the mystical interpretation of the Bible suggests that God had created and destroyed many previous worlds before He created the present one.

Without the possibility of making our own choices - toward redemption or toward destruction, toward good or toward evil, toward life or toward death - the human is not the same human, and the world is not the same world. The glory of both God and humanity is to be found in the opening phrase of the Bible.

Shabbat Shalom

A VIEW FROM NOV

The elephant and the 'occupation' problem



By MOSHE KOHN

Objectivity is the ability to "express or deal with facts or conditions as perceived without distortion by personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations" (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition).

Note the crucial qualifying clause in this definition, "as perceived."

A person observing an event from one part of the arena or the street is likely to see something not perceptible by someone seeing the same event from a different part. And people of different socio-cultural and educational backgrounds are likely to hear, perceive and report the same events differently.

an elephant" to be "very like a fan!" The sixth, landing by the tail, says the elephant "is very like a rope."

The men then get into a heated argument over their respective perceptions. "Each in his own opinion / Exceeding stiff and strong, / Though each was partly in the right, / And all were in the wrong!" (Poetry Festival, edited by John Bettenbender, N.Y., Dell, 1966).

Nevertheless, there is always what George Orwell has called unchallengeable "neutral fact." He wrote:

"In the past people deliberately lied, or they unconsciously colored what they wrote, or they struggled after the truth, well knowing that they must make many mistakes; but in each case they believed that 'the facts' existed and were more or less discoverable... If you look up the history of [World War I] in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, you will find that a respectable amount of the material is drawn from German sources. A British and a German historian would disagree deeply on many things, even on fundamentals, but there would still be that body of, as it were, neutral fact on which neither would seriously challenge the other" (Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters, Volume 2, My Country Right or Left 1940-1943, Penguin, 1970, page 296. Thanks to Ralph Katzencell of Binyamina).

ONE HUGE problem in the bloody, eight-decade-old Arab-Jewish conflict in Eretz Yisrael is that for the Arab leaders and spokespersons and their non-Arab collaborators and a growing number of their constituents, there has never been a neutral fact pertaining to the conflict on which they will agree with or even with a disinterested observer. Some say it openly, others conceal it in a labyrinth of euphemisms or just meaningless, evasive words.

Among the former is one of Islam's leading

authorities, Muhammad Sayyed al-Tantawi, chief sheikh of Cairo's Al-Azhar Mosque.

Islam, like Judaism, ranks suicide as a sin. However, Tantawi has ruled that a Moslem who serves as a human bomb in order to take Jewish lives along with his own - or the lives of anyone declared to be an enemy - is not a sinful suicide, but a noble shahid, martyr, a "holy witness" to the justice of the Arab/Moslem cause.

Addressing an assembly of students at the University of Alexandria recently, he noted that Islam, like the other monotheistic religions, forbids the murder of children and old or helpless people. However, Jews are "attackers," and therefore not entitled to exemption as "aged, child or woman." And the shahid, who takes Jewish lives is considered to have acted in self-defense.

In sum, "Since the Jews cause us evil, we must fight them courageously." And "The youth of the Islamic resistance who blow themselves up in order to cause casualties are considered the greatest of those who die, because they die as martyrs."

A group of Israeli rabbis has several times this year called on Tantawi and other Moslem prelates to urge their junior colleagues to preach against the attacks in Israel's civilian centers, and to halt the inflammatory anti-Israel, anti-Jewish rhetoric. He responded: "When the land is taken by force and oppression prevails, anger prevails and attacks occur in self-defense. When Jewish religious figures incite to oppression, should I stand silent?"

He might have been asked a few questions for clarification; perhaps someone will ask him now: In what circumstances was that land "taken by force"? Who was the original "self-defender," and still is, in the Arab-Jewish conflict? Can he name any of his Jewish counterparts - all the generations of our chief rabbis - who "incite to oppres-

sion," indeed to murder, the way he and other leading Moslem Arab clerics do?

It would be interesting to see to what extent his replies jibe with neutral fact and to what extent they are ideological figments born of blind, demonologically based hatred.

(The Tantawi citations were collated by the Foreign Ministry.)

OUR SO-CALLED Peace Camp, has defined "the occupation" as embracing Judea, Samaria, and (its more radical wing) eastern Jerusalem and all of the Golan Heights. Hence, our moderate peaceniks are prepared, in exchange for peace, to "give back everything - except Jerusalem, of course," and perhaps also a specified section of the Golan.

The Arafatians, however, have not yet unequivocally renounced their Palestine-liberation intentions, and have not dissociated themselves from their Hamas kissing partners' broader definition of "occupation."

"The 'occupation'... means the occupation of all of Palestine... my country," Abdel Aziz Rantisi, the Gaza Hamas leader, said in his own name and that of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. He was interviewed in English by Dr. Aaron Lerner, codirector of IMRA/Independent Media & Review and Analysis.

Are the true, neutral facts significant at all to the likes of Rantisi, or for that matter, of the Arafatians?

As for Sheikh Yassin, with whom some of our rabbis wish to form a "religious front" to fight materialism, permissiveness, etc. - he maintains that "Within a few years there will be no more State of Israel, so there is no point in entering into negotiations with her" (Yedion Aharonot, October 12).

E-mail comments to: moshe@post.co.il. Please include home address.

Advertisement for Mishkan Ha'ir in Jerusalem, featuring a photo of the building and text: 'ONLY A SELECT NUMBER OF PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO INDULGE THEMSELVES MISHKAN HA'IR - FOR JUST 18 LUCKY FAMILIES'.

Advertisement for 'SAFED' featuring a large title and text: 'Join us, and discover its secrets. This unique, small mountain-top town was the center of Jewish mysticism and Kabbala. For centuries the home of rabbis and sages, and recently of artists, it continues to attract visitors from around the world.'

Vertical advertisement on the left edge of the page, partially cut off, with text like 'The Jerusalem Post', 'poil reer?', and 'adise'.

War of the weapons

US and Israeli military industries play dirty in the battle to win Poland's weapon contracts, reports Steve Rodan

Managing America's foreign policy is a full-time job for Madeleine Albright. It includes trips around the world, meetings with visiting foreign dignitaries and emergency calls to hotspots such as Cyprus and the Israeli-Palestinian arena.

But in July, the US Secretary of State took time out for a little-publicized meeting with Polish leaders over a bitterly-fought tender for the upgrade of Polish military helicopters. Albright was rooting for a Western consortium headed by Boeing North American Inc. She told her Polish counterparts that she hoped the bidding was fair.

Boeing's competitor for the bid was an Israeli consortium, comprising Elbit Systems Ltd., Rafael Israel Armaments Weapons Authority and El-Op Electro-Optics Industries.

"And I will personally make the point to other governments that if their countries want to sell in our backyard, they had better allow America to do business in theirs," she added.

The secretary's words startled the Poles. They delayed a decision about the deal, but eventually stuck to their original intention. Last week, the outgoing Polish government announced it was awarding the contract to the Israelis. The deal, estimated to be worth at least \$650 million, was to upgrade Poland's fleet of Huzar military helicopters.

The competition over the contract pointed to some new rules emerging in US relations with its allies. Despite the excellent state of US-Israeli ties, the nations have become fierce competitors in the defense marketplace. Some analysts predict that the rivalry will intensify.

"This is the second big contract that US defense companies lost to Israel," Reuven Pedatzur, director of the Gali Center for Strategy and National Security, says. "US defense executives are increasingly complaining that Washington gives Israel \$3 billion a year and then Israel competes with them for contracts with American



Will the Americans try to pressure Poland to cancel the huge helicopter contract it awarded Israel? (David Rubinger)

allies." The US pressure on Poland to award the contract to Boeing never let up after Albright's visit. US officials repeatedly urged Warsaw not to forget that the Clinton administration was lobbying Congress for aid and trade credits. In September, British and US diplomats in Warsaw argued

with Polish officials that they should choose a NATO supplier for a military upgrade that would meet alliance standards. That meant the Israeli bid would have to be rejected.

"The US pulled out all the stops," a defense executive involved in the deal says. "The pressure on Poland was

tremendous and the tactics used by the competitors did not observe any rules of fair play," Pedatzur says.

But the Poles held firm and granted Israel the entire contract, against all the predictions of Western and US diplomats.

According to the agreement signed by Defense Ministry director-general Ilan Biran and his Polish counterpart last week, the Israeli consortium will upgrade the Huzars and fit them with advanced anti-tank missiles. Boeing will not have any part in the project.

"The agreement is for the entire project and includes all the parameters," a defense official says. "From our point of view, the matter is concluded."

The saga began in 1994 when Poland decided to produce 40 combat helicopters a year, starting in 1999, and to upgrade the Polish-made Huzars.

Helicopter manufacturing had been Poland's field of expertise during the Warsaw Pact era. During the Cold War it provided more than 5,000 such aircraft to East Bloc nations. But Poland's financial woes later led Warsaw to abandon its own fleet and today only 30 Mi-24 helicopters are considered operational.

After deciding to equip its Huzars with an advanced anti-tank missile, the Poles issued a tender and invited Western nations to participate.

Soon, two offers were under consideration, one from Rafael, which offered the NT-D missile. The other was from the French-Canadian Eurohelicopters company, which offered the GT-5 air-to-ground anti-tank weapon system.

The NT-D soon became the darling of the Polish military. The missile was of the fire-and-forget type, allowing a helicopter to launch the projectile and then quickly get out of harm's way. The missile has a television camera that allows the helicopter crew to follow and ensure that it hit its target.

Rafael wasn't alone in the contract. Israel offered to upgrade the Huzar with advanced avionics and fire-control and targeting systems, that would be conducted by Elbit and El-Op.

Enter Rockwell International Corp. In early 1996, the US company decided to enter the bidding and offered its AGM-114 missile, called Hellfire. Unlike the NT-D, the Hellfire was proven in combat over the last 20 years and a staple of the Israeli Air Force.

Soon there were lobbies in Warsaw for both Rafael and Rockwell.

Rockwell supporters stressed that the Hellfire meets NATO standards. But Rafael enthusiasts in Poland argued that the NT-D was state-of-the-art and cheaper than Hellfire.

Defense executives recall the biggest difference was that Israel was willing to provide NT-D technology. The Pentagon would not do the same for the Hellfire.

By January 1997, the Poles were ready to decide. Polish Defense Minister Stanislaw Dobrzanski arrived in Israel and observed a test of the NT-D. He told *The Jerusalem Post* in an interview that the Rafael was the only offer being considered. But he added that the contract was being divided. One contract would go for the missile and the other for the upgrade of the Huzar.

Elbit, El-Op and Rockwell continued battling it out for the Huzar project. By this time, Rockwell was merging with Boeing.

The US lobby stepped up the pressure. Defense executives say that Boeing plants and potential subcontractors were getting in touch with Congressional representatives. The message was clear: if we lose the contract, that means a loss of jobs.

GRAPEVINE By GREER FAY CASHMAN

Friends indeed

As miserly as he is with public funds, he's very generous with his own, said lawyer Michael Fox, chairman of the Israel Friends of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, speaking of his former partner Yaacov Neeman at the fifth annual Steinsaltz tribute dinner at the Sheraton Plaza, Jerusalem. Fox then went on to describe the liberal personal philanthropy of the finance minister. Neeman for his part, speaking on his own behalf and that of his wife, Hadassah, publicly thanked Fox and his wife, Sheila, for the unconditional friendship which they had demonstrated over the past 26 years. In an emotional address Neeman, in an oblique reference in the courtroom cloud which had threatened his reputation, repeatedly expressed appreciation to the Foxes for their support, their camaraderie, and their

friendship during the most difficult of times. Adin Steinsaltz commented in response that it is customary to say good things (about other people) quietly and to vent anger aloud.



Uzi Baram (left) and Yehoram Gaon: Up for the mayoral spot



(Yissel Hadari/ Efraim Kishor)

friendship during the most difficult of times. Adin Steinsaltz commented in response that it is customary to say good things (about other people) quietly and to vent anger aloud.

PRIOR to Neeman's unexpected outpouring, the largely religiously observant audience was pleasantly surprised by Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who in an off-the-cuff address, covered a wide range of religious topics and quoted many religious sources. Some cynics claimed that Mordechai had made an early election campaign start, but none could fault anything he'd said.

MANY a mother with a young marriageable daughter had her eye on Jonathan Leibler, the good-looking, personable, bonhomie-success youngest son of Naomi and Isi Leibler of Melbourne and Jerusalem. But the beautiful Naomi Mauser, daughter of Cecile and Ari Mauser formerly of Belgium and now of Jerusalem, captured his heart without any maternal intervention. The long arm of coincidence has delighted Rachel Leibler, grandmother of the prospective groom, who is also of Belgian background. She discovered that she and the Mausers have so many friends in common, they almost feel like old friends themselves. Relatives and friends of both families attended a reception this week hosted by the Leiblers to toast the happiness of the young couple.

IT never hurts to have another profession to fall back on. New York actor Mark Bellows, who flew in for the holidays to spend some time in Jerusalem with his grandmother Nina Bellows, is also a practicing lawyer.

A handsome bachelor with a smile just made for toothpaste commercials, Bellows, who stars in the critically acclaimed new movie *Rapscallions*, was reluctant to say much about his acting career, explaining that it's a well-known fact in Hollywood and New York that any actor who shoots off his mouth about what he's done is usually out of work.

OCTOBER should be given the additional sobriquet of Peace Month. October 6 witnessed the commemoration of the assassination of Egyptian president



Robin Williams gets into character for a more serious role. (U2P.A.)

Anwar Sadat, the first Arab leader to enter into a peace treaty with Israel. This week saw the official inauguration of the Peres Center for Peace. And later in the month *On the Brink of Peace*, a new television documentary examining the roller coaster history of the Middle East peace process, will premiere in New York. Written, directed and produced by Alan Rosenthal, a Hebrew University professor of communications, the production features former Israel foreign minister Abba Eban as host. This is the fifth film on which the two have collaborated. *On the Brink of Peace*, which was made for WNET Channel 13 in New York, will make its US Public Television debut on October 28.

MAKING her acting debut on October 27 is Sharon Shapiro, who will play the part of the beautiful Helena in the bilingual production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to be staged by The Sharon Players in conjunction with the Ra'anana Theater Group and the Ra'anana Youth Theater. The mother of six children aged 5 to 15, Shapiro, when asked by one of her brood in *define her role*, responded, "I'm a lover!" Not quite in character for a religious mom - but considering that it's only make-believe, it's an interesting diversion.

LABOR MK Uzi Baram is expected to announce next week whether or not he will run against incumbent Ehud Olmert in Jerusalem's mayoral election race. Baram has been quoted several times as saying that he would not run unless he stood a very good chance of win-

USUALLY frenetic funnyman Robin Williams was in Poland for a much more serious role in the Holocaust-based film *Jacob the Liar*, the story of how a Jew in the Lodz ghetto tried to save a young girl from the Nazis. Shooting on location in Lodz, Williams and other members of the cast discovered that despite the fact that antisemitism is outlawed under Poland's new constitution, it still exists. Scrawled across the wall of the Lodz synagogue was the crude message "Jews go back to Auschwitz." This may have inspired Williams and others on the set to attend Kol Nidrei services at the synagogue. Alternately, they may have done it anyway to get more into the mood of the movie. Then again, some of the people were Jewish and glad of the opportunity to be able to join some 30 regular congregants.

BRULIK by DOSH

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Gift of old money (6)
- British affected manners, say, of privates (5)
- Round the navy, tea is served in fancy style (6)
- Smooth and cheerful on air-beds, perhaps (8)
- Mail goes astray in capital (4)
- Some prehistoric reptiles crawled on all fours (5)
- Total power where oil is found (4)
- Early carriage propelled by generator? (12)
- Book showing current-cake, one as set out (12)
- Design h of factory incomplete? (4)
- Scope of morning-piece (5)
- Creature dead, with nothing to follow? You can say that again! (4)
- Noble trio of Beethoven (3)
- Einstein, for example, using energy in formula (6)
- List of terms giving polish to a line (8)
- Test of gold leading to bargain? (6)
- English writer seen in baggage-pole (5)
- Nelson's column, for example, makes impression underground (8)
- Sign register (4)
- Potter's way of keeping advantage (12)
- Backward-flying owls (4)

DOWN

- Such endless air-trouble he had, coming unetick (6)
- Thinly-spread butter for pickle (6)
- Ringleader in remote Kabul, going around as a rabble-rouser (12)
- Smell of a fishing-vestal (5)
- This row goes on endlessly, we hear (5)
- Poleax derived from a crustacean (8)
- Support for displaced Poles, going around America (8)
- Bounded from singular accident? (6)
- Argentinian suffering a cough (8)
- Bad time for Caesar in squalid escapade (4)
- Last in river? (4)

SOLUTIONS

Quick Solution

ACROSS: 1 Far-off, 4 Healed, 7 Dashed, 8 Deer, 10 Hat, 11 Show, 12 Eagle, 14 Prayer, 15 Tord, 17 Smooth, 18 Asoop, 20 Plus, 22 Seat, 23 Schoelag, 24 Garret, 25 Deluge.

DOWN: 1 Fossil, 2 Over, 3 Freight, 4 Beat up, 5 Able, 6 Dealer, 7 Dangerous, 8 Easy-going, 11 Septa, 12 Troup, 15 Day dog, 16 Doves, 17 Sided, 19 Hobble, 21 Son, 22 Sail.

QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Broadcast (5)
- Glowed (5)
- Rival (7)
- Trench (5)
- Slip-up (5)
- Bodily signal (7)
- Fursem bone (4)
- French river (5)
- Glib patter (5)
- Declare (4)
- Red pepper (7)
- On a par (5)
- Overturn (5)
- Given in outline (7)
- Two-wheeler (5)
- Precipitous (5)

DOWN

- Fit out (5)
- Non-professional (7)
- Underworld (5)
- Japanese toggle (7)
- Kingdom (5)
- Prefer (5)
- Leader (5)
- Stupidness (4)
- Thin (4)
- Greek epic (7)
- Specious excuse (7)
- Stunted vegetation (5)
- Poetry (5)
- Stagnant (5)
- Of one's birth (5)
- Pawabovker (5)

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Table of Israeli shares listed on NYSE, including companies like Bank Leumi, Bank Hapoalim, etc.

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Table of Israeli shares listed in London, including companies like Bank Leumi, Bank Hapoalim, etc.

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Table of international shares listed in New York, including companies like Alza, AMP Inc, ASB, etc.

NEW YORK

Table of international shares listed in New York, including companies like Dayton Hudson, De Beers, etc.

NEW YORK

Table of international shares listed in New York, including companies like Lamps Corp, Lona Star, etc.

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Markets reel amid Asian turmoil

LONDON (Reuters) - Global stock markets skidded and bond prices were catapulted higher yesterday as Asia's market turmoil sent investors fleeing for safe havens.

The Dow Jones index was jolted after Hong Kong stocks closed 10 percent lower, triggered by soaring interest rates and fears of a run on the Hong Kong dollar.

"If the Dow starts to fall aggressively then terror will spread pretty quickly in the bond markets and the squeeze goes on," said Simon Cook, head of trading at Cooperative Bank in London.

The Dow was the latest victim of the jittery atmosphere surrounding stocks as it fell 170 points in initial trade.

US Treasuries and other major debt markets spiralled higher while Japan's stocks and Britain's FTSE 100, which has several large blue chips with major connections to Hong Kong, tumbled.

Markets in Hong Kong have come under pressure after Taiwan late last week abandoned an iron-clad defense of its currency. The Hong Kong index was almost 16 percent down on one point yesterday, the biggest slide ever in the history of the exchange.

The Hong Kong dollar stayed firm, bolstered by the sky-high interest rates running up to 250-300%, and major currencies such as the yen received only a mild jolt.

Hong Kong chief executive Tung Chee-hwa, during a visit to London which ended yesterday, has vowed several times this week that the Hong Kong dollar would be defended.

On Wednesday he said Hong Kong would not go for a competitive devaluation as others in the region had, and yesterday he added that repercussions on the stock market were to be expected.

"There is tremendous determination on the part of the Hong Kong government to maintain the exchange rate. We have every confidence this can be done," he told journalists in London.

In London, some analysts said there could be a respite from the market turmoil.

Analysts said the meltdown in Asian markets could put back the timetable for any interest rate rise by the US Federal Reserve - a factor which had kept the market on tenterhooks lately.

"It will be a factor inhibiting the Fed from raising interest rates in response to US domestic factors and, as a result, bonds will probably do quite well," said Stephen Lewis, chief economist at London Bond Broker.

Analysts in Asia expected Hong Kong to go to great lengths to keep the Hong Kong dollar peg in place. The official peg is HK\$7.8 per US dollar, and the market tends to stay on the strong side of that level.

The Hong Kong dollar firmed in London yesterday amid a short squeeze, but dealers here said forward rates were looking ominous.

It was quoted at HK\$7.33 to the US dollar by 1500 GMT, stronger than HK\$7.7410/20 at the Hong Kong open yesterday. Britain's FTSE 100 index, featuring hard-hit stocks such as HSBC, closed down 3% yesterday.

Large advertisement for the book 'Our Life, His Legacy' about Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, featuring a portrait of Rabin and promotional text.

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Some of the advertisements appearing in our papers are typeset outside The Post. When such an advertisement arrives just before the publication deadline, especially when it is provided in the form of a film, it is difficult for us to correct any spelling mistakes that may appear.

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	Hold on	Start date	Hold on	Start date
NEW UPCOMING COURSE SCHEDULE				
TECHNICAL WRITING (morning session)	Sun., Tue., Thur., 9 a.m. - 12 noon	Oct. 30	Sun., Tue., Thur., 9 a.m. - 12 noon	Dec. 14
TECHNICAL WRITING (evening session)	Sun., Tue., Thur., 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.	Oct. 30	Sun., Tue., Thur., 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.	Dec. 14
WEB PUBLISHING	Wednesdays 9 p.m. - 9 p.m.	Nov. 5	Wednesdays 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.	Nov. 5
CNE Express Track (7 courses)	Mon. & Wed. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Nov. 10	Tue. & Thur. 12:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Nov. 11
CNE Regular Track (7 courses)	Mon. & Wed. 8 p.m. - 9 p.m.	Nov. 10	Tue. & Thur. 8 p.m. - 9 p.m.	Nov. 11
WINDOWS NT MCSE Express Track (6 courses)	Tue. & Thur. 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Jan. 6	Mon. & Wed. 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Nov. 10
WINDOWS NT MCSE Regular Track (6 courses)	Tue. & Thur. 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.	Jan. 6	Mon. & Wed. 8 p.m. - 9 p.m.	Nov. 10
TA* PC SUPPORT ENGINEER (part. CW)	Sun. 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.	Nov. 16	Wed. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Nov. 12
MULTIMEDIA DEVELOPMENT	Wed. 9 a.m. - 12 noon	Nov. 12	Sun. 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.	Dec. 7
VISUAL C++	Mon. 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.	Nov. 17	Sun. 12 noon - 3 p.m.	Dec. 7
VISUAL BASIC	Mon. 12 noon - 3 p.m.	Nov. 10	Sun. 9 a.m. - 12 noon	Nov. 9
C/C++ PROGRAMMING	Mon. 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.	Nov. 17	Mon. 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Nov. 17
CORREL DRAW	Mon. 9 a.m. - 12 noon	Nov. 24	Wed. 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.	Nov. 28

USER'S COURSES

Courses	Start Date and Time	
	Tel Aviv	Jerusalem
Intro to PC	Thur., Nov. 13 1-5 p.m.	Tue., Nov. 11 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Excel I	Tue., Nov. 11 1-5 p.m.	Thur., Nov. 13 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Excel II	Sun., Nov. 9 1-5 p.m.	Thur., Nov. 13 1-5 p.m.
Word I	Wed., Nov. 12 1-5 p.m.	Tue., Nov. 11 5-9 p.m.
Word II	Mon., Nov. 10 1-5 p.m.	Tue., Nov. 11 1-5 p.m.
Internet	Fri., Nov. 14 9 a.m.-1 p.m.	Fri., Nov. 14 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
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Senior Hamas official Khaled Mashaal, left, welcomes women guests to a dinner to celebrate his recovery from a Mossad assassination attempt in Jordan last month and the freeing from an Israeli jail of Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin; to Mashaal's left is his predecessor, Musa Abu Marzook. The dinner was also attended by Jordan's chief of the royal court and leader of the senate. (Reuters)

Court rejects state inquiry into Mashaal Affair

By BATSHEVA TSUR

The High Court of Justice turned down a petition on Wednesday from Amati, Citizens for Good Government, to establish a state commission of inquiry into the Mashaal Affair. Only extreme and unusual circumstances would justify the intervention of the court in such a

matter, the court said in rejecting the petition. It is the government's prerogative not to set up any type of inquiry, the court noted. The court cited the precedent of the Bar-On Affair where, during the summer, it had rejected several petitions calling for inquiry commissions. There is currently a three-member Clarification Committee looking into the affair in which two

Mossad agents were arrested in Jordan after injecting senior Hamas official Khaled Mashaal with a poisonous substance. The affair has been described as the worst failure in the history of Israel's security services. The court also turned down an alternative request in the petition that two members of the committee be changed, because of conflict of interests. They are committee

head Joseph Ciechanover who heads the board at El Al and former police chief Rafi Peled who is head of the Israel Electric Corporation. National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon will visit Amman next week, Israel Radio reported last night. It will be the first visit by a high-ranking Israeli official since the Mashaal case was resolved.

Congress releases hold on Israel aid

By HILLEL KUTTLER

WASHINGTON - House foreign operations committee chairman Sonny Callahan on Wednesday released a hold on the first installment of Israel's assistance package, a \$75.6 million section of the overall \$1.2 billion in economic assistance.

Although both the House and Senate have passed foreign aid bills, reconciling the two has been held up, in part, because of differing funding levels for Jordan. That matter was among the items to be considered during a House-Senate "conference" on the bill yesterday.

The hold also occurred because of anger expressed by House appropriations committee chairman Robert Livingston in the case of S., the 17-year-old Maryland resident seeking refuge in Israel from murder charges. But Livingston said he was pleased by Israel's decision this week to allow extradition.

Callahan is determined not to exceed a \$5.4b. cap on aid to the Middle East. Israel and Egypt together receive more than \$5b. annually. The Senate bill would provide \$250m. to Jordan this year, while the House version contains \$175m. Callahan has stated that additional funds to Amman would have to come from the packages of the current recipients.

Callahan said that he removed the hold because "I believe we have

achieved general agreement on future funding levels for the Middle East which support American interests in the Middle East and safeguard all our friends and allies there, even as we protect American taxpayer dollars. This agreement enables us to move forward on the overall foreign aid appropriations bill so we can fund programs and activities vital to our nation's security."

Callahan's spokesman Jo Bonner would not state what the agreement was, but said that Callahan "sees more clearly that other participants besides the US are willing to make sacrifices toward assisting Jordan."

"There was never any direct or indirect intention to penalize Israel. But we felt the hold was the best way to get everyone to the table. We're all in agreement that Jordan needs more assistance. But [Callahan] was not willing to go back to the American people to increase it. Other countries are going to be participating to resolve this," Bonner said.

But Israeli embassy officials who deal with foreign aid said there are no US-Israel-Jordan-Egypt discussions on addressing where Jordan's funds will come from. Israel has already stated it is willing to transfer \$50 million to Jordan, but it is reluctant to have the money taken off the top by the Congress, fearing it would mark a precedent to lower Israel's total annual allocation.

Man killed at roadblock

By ANIEN O'SULLIVAN

IDF soldiers manning a roadblock in the southern Gaza Strip on Wednesday riddled a car with automatic gunfire and mortally wounded its driver, who they claim was trying to run them down. The army said the man was

later identified as a 35-year-old Israeli citizen from Ashkelon and police have launched an investigation into the matter. The vehicle, the army said, approached the roadblock from the south and, according to the soldiers, was charging them at a very high speed in an attempt to run them down.

WEATHER

Hails	14-25	Tiberias	14-25
Tel Aviv	15-25	Asula	15-27
Sarona	14-25	Jerusalem	12-22
Berensheim	14-27	Einat	17-22

Forecast: Partly cloudy to clear.
Rise in temperatures.
Shabbat: Rise in temperatures.

AROUND THE WORLD

City	Low	High	Forecast
Amsterdam	10	15	cloudy
Berlin	10	15	cloudy
Brussels	10	15	cloudy
London	10	15	cloudy
Madrid	10	15	cloudy
Moscow	10	15	cloudy
New York	10	15	cloudy
Paris	10	15	cloudy
Rome	10	15	cloudy
Tokyo	10	15	cloudy
Washington	10	15	cloudy

A flicker of eyelids for new Middle East.

By ABRAHAM RABINOVICH

Like a beautiful woman cast up seemingly lifeless from the sea, the prostrate peace process was surrounded this week on Tel Aviv's shorefront by a host of well-wishers prepared to offer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. The aid given at the opening of the Peres Center for Peace at the Hilton Hotel was mostly mouth-to-mouth - two days of speeches by dozens of guests from around the world and the region who shared Shimon Peres' vision, however frayed by current realities, of a new Middle East. The good news was that the victim's eyelids seemed to flicker, a sign of life induced not by any political breakthrough but by the optimism - or at least dogged hope - that most of the distinguished participants managed to project despite the difficulties they readily acknowledged.

Historian Paul Kennedy of Yale suggested an even more ambitious goal - rewriting history. Behind every nasty conflict, he said, lay distortions of history in which one side's special claims are justified while the other side is shown as depraved. Prof. Kennedy proposed a joint project involving Israeli, Arab and foreign historians to write a new history of the Middle East. Prof. Sung-Joo Han of Korea, who has studied conflicts in his own country, Cyprus and then-divided Germany, said that hardliners on both sides to a dispute inevitably maintain that if you make a concession the other side will only pocket it and ask for more. Only force they argue, can make the other side come to terms. "Hardliners on both sides have an interest in precipitating conflict." The non-hardliners in these disputes, he said, argue that the other side must be

provided a stake that would give them an interest in keeping agreements. Swiss banker Edgar de Picciotto said that the contending parties in the Middle East will eventually succumb to world trends and their own commercial natures. "Globalization has superseded the political system," he said. Peace was inevitable because of economic forces, he contended, and so was a regional structure in the Middle East ("This region is the quintessence of entrepreneurship") similar to the one that has taken shape in Europe. The Peres Peace Center has prepared a list of projects ranging from Palestinian-Israeli dialogues to an industrial park on the Gaza border. Whatever the condition of that prostrate lady on the Mediterranean shore, Shimon Peres and his friends are clearly not ready to let her rest in peace.

Prof. Shimon Shamir, Israel's former ambassador to Jordan and Egypt, noted that the problem of Israel's integration into the region went beyond the hostility of governments and narrow intellectual strata in Arab countries and therefore could not be changed simply by demanding that the official line in those countries towards Israel become more civil. The main objective, he said, must be to "de-demonize" mutual perceptions. As a starter, it was important to be able to differentiate among groups in the opposite camp rather than seeing them en masse as the enemy. "The peace process started when Israelis began to realize there is a difference between Yasser Arafat and Abu Nidal," said Shamir. Making such differentiations, however, was no simple matter. "I have an Egyptian friend," he said, "who says there are no hawks and doves in Israel, only hawks and hawks that coo." What should be done? Encourage familiarity, said Shamir. Although Jordanians can easily pick up Israeli television, visitors from that country are inevitably surprised by what they find in Israel. "A Jordanian friend told me that from what he had seen on television he had expected to find nothing but men with beards and men with rifles." Jordan is now preparing a series of 10 television programs, called "Who are They?" on aspects of daily life in Israel. "They might now call it 'Who the hell are they?'" he joked. As useful as such programs were, there was nothing as effective in changing people's perception of each other as direct human contacts and these, he said, must be promoted.

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